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**Investigating the Notion of Homeland in Palestine - PLO Returnees' Experience:
Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Homeland Under Israeli Occupation**

Rania Arabi

A Thesis

In

The Department

of

Sociology and Anthropology

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
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Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the Notion of Homeland in Palestine - PLO Returnees' Experience: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Homeland Under Israeli Occupation

Rania Arabi, M.A.

As a result of the political return of part of the PLO's leadership and cadres to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, an outcome of the Oslo Peace Agreement in 1993, there has been a transition from an extra-territorial notion of homeland to the territorialized notion, i.e. state formation and bureaucracy. The return of the PLO was followed by the formation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). This transition is connected with the notion of normalization of life and adjustment to the daily reality in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In that context, the ideal of homeland has been changed. Homeland remains partly an ideal and partly the reality of everyday life, which brings it to challenging questions in the most recent context of post-9/11 and the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. This transition brought about a number of problems that will be addressed in depth in the investigation of homeland and the experience of return. The issues at stake deal with the reality of present day Palestine and what Palestinians have come to experience with losing their geographic homeland, the struggle to get it back and making peace with a compromise.

This thesis investigates the notion of homeland from the point of view of PLO returnees: the clash between the vision of Palestine as 'homeland', the vision of a state, and the present reality. The study is mainly based on semi-structured interviews, and also uses life histories and narratives of the selected sample of the PLO Returnees. Theoretically, this work is backed by the work of a number of authors in anthropology, sociology, geography and political science. The centrality of the notion of 'homeland', the notion of memory construction, the role of the imagination in building a nation and/or community and the diaspora experiences are all central in the theoretical formulation. The choice of this research topic about Palestine is supported by the absence of research focused on understanding the notion of 'homeland' in Palestine in general and in particular, from the perspective of the PLO returnees, the impact of their vision on the Palestinian discourse about homeland, return, and the formation of a Palestinian state.

Dedications

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandfather Ahmed Deeb Abdel Majeed Orabi. Without his memory I would not have been Palestinian and I would not have chosen this research topic. In memory of his struggle, of his pain and loss after his exile and his family in 1948 to Jordan, of his death that was speeded up by after leaving Palestine, and in memory of his history and the transmission of it.

I also extend my dedication to my father, Fouad Orabi, and to my relatives who were all exiled across the world in 1948 from Jaffa and Jerusalem. My father introduced me to Palestine and the struggle for justice of its people. He is my guiding light. Without his perseverance and dedication to my brothers and I, for education and knowledge, we all would not have become who we are now. I am very grateful to his sacrifice and giving. This thesis came about because he was there in my life.

To my mother, Nafiseh Qubbani, who believed in me and provided her support, encouragement, and faith throughout my research and writing process. She was my comfort and nourishment when I needed it the most. To her I am very grateful for I would not have made it without her love.

To my three brothers Amjad, Ashraf, and Aysar who were supportive in all means, I dedicate this thesis as an expression of my love and gratitude.

To the memory of all Palestinians and other nationals who believe in justice for Palestine and justice and peace around the world, to those who have lost their lives or were scarred, to all the faithful in the vision for a better future for all, I dedicate this thesis to them, and to all homes and homelands, and those in search of them: may all be found in peace...

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Prologue

As a Palestinian researcher involved in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, I was inclined to project a solution, a solution my informants talked about openly. However, because this work is not about offering solutions, I did not wish to present any solution as the only one, or use this work for this purpose. I would rather present a description of the problems with Palestine, help in giving a better understanding of the notion of homeland in Palestine and present a lived reality that is better known through people's experiences and my own observations as an anthropologist in the field.

Since the Palestinian question, the issues of homeland in Palestine and the Israeli occupation are not only a Middle Eastern issue; it is a conflict in a historical context of unequivocal American support to the colonial project in Palestine. It is in the context of post-911, the single-minded focus on terror and anti-Islamic, anti-Arab attitudes. It is also surprisingly about silence, even though a huge literature exists on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The silencing of voices and rights is over-whelming. This does not only include the Palestinians but also many other nationals around the world. The Palestinians and Palestine are no more special or significant in that world picture of injustice. These questions are still with us in the post-911 world that show us how small the world is, and how dependent we are on one another.

I present this thesis as a form of defiance and a way of communicating out of the silence, using the word, not a weapon. Perhaps someone will read and learn from this research, will understand the inter-connectedness of all these issues, and the urgency to find understanding, to integrate one human experience with others, and to take responsible action.

I present this dissertation as a work of the heart, with much of the pain, the joy, and the many other emotions and thoughts that came together to give this paper form and meaning. I present it with a loss of faith in the world's ability to do something to minimize suffering, the product of collective pain and desperation. It is also a vision for a future, evidently to come, that perhaps has no nation-states, no boundaries, no borders, no walls different nations - and that equality, even with our differences is surely the only way. Let the words to come be an expression of the vision, which in and of itself is incomplete, partial, and is part of others' works.

Chapter One

Introduction

There is a lacuna in the Palestinian narrative particularly concerning the self and its relationship to homeland. In this narrative of returning exiles, there is passion expressed in love and longing. There are mistakes. There is misuse of a 'just' cause for personal aspirations. There is much idealism and dramatization. There is dedication, a strong will, and a story of a journey in and out of exile, and in some experiences, into another exile. Their stories are filled with emotions, ideals, and experience. Passion with force. A passion that makes buds flower and also makes one sacrifice one's life. A rainbow of expressions. Those returning souls yearned for home, for a national homeland. But they also yearn for the homeland of dignity and security; the homeland of the past and the future. Their attempt began with establishing an authority to take the form of a state. Above all, it was not a perfect process. Inner conflicts and struggles exist. What is crucial, I believe, is that they will probably be the ones to define the official homeland of Palestine to the world. This maybe a problem since it is the national discourse, and not the only one of Palestine. For this reason I find it compelling to tell the stories I heard, for the sake of other voices that are still out there, differing in their view of Palestine. These stories will bring one narrative concerning the homeland in Palestine, with its different voices, into an anthropological adventure. The importance of this narrative is because it talks about power, about those whose hearts are involved with Palestine and those who used Palestine to serve their interests. This narrative can be beneficial for Palestinians to be aware of their inner issues and for others interested in this region, to know what kind of homeland is emerging out of this narrative. In that narrative is found part of the 'truth'. And here is how this story goes...(Personal field notes - March 30, 2000)

1.1 Research Problem

This dissertation focuses mainly on investigating the notion of **homeland** in Palestine from the point of view of PLO returnees. It also explores the notion and experience of **return** to Palestine from the point of view of **PLO returnees** from exile. This category of returnees came back after the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) on Interim Self-Government Authority on September 13, 1993, what is referred to as the Oslo Accords. The DoP laid the ground for the return of Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and his Tunis-based PLO

cadres to Palestine.¹ Consequently it established the Palestinian National Authority, the PNA or PA.

The objective of this research is to understand the notion of homeland in Palestine, the meaning of Palestine, what it is composed of, and why it has this significance among Palestinians, all within the context of the international interest in the Palestinian question. Through interviews with those who have returned, I hope to ground the notion of a homeland in Palestine in experience, because return is central in the Palestinian discourse and question.

I have chosen a sample of returnees to the Palestinian territories, who are either directly or indirectly affiliated with the PLO. The reason for the choice of this group is that they are the only 'official returnees' to the Palestinian territories since the signing of the Oslo Agreement. Through their experience in exile, with its particular political edge, the notion of homeland in Palestine is discussed and taken to the level of actual experience, focused by the experience of return.

In this research, I will be using the term Palestine in different ways. First, it refers to historic Palestine, British-Mandated Palestine. In 1948 it was divided into Israel and Palestine, with Palestine composed of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. In the 1967 war, the Palestinian territories were occupied by Israel. Second, it will be used to refer to the future Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestine is a homeland claimed by two groups. In the post-WWII context, both the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews have claimed ownership to it. The Jewish claim is supported by a Zionist colonial vision of creating a homeland for the Jews alone, a vision

¹ The majority of the PLO returnees came from Tunis, however, some did return from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and other countries.

that is based on a promise from God to 'His Chosen People.' The Palestinian claim is that they are the indigenous people of the land of Palestine, having been there for centuries, with memory and history. The Palestinian claim is not a religious one. It does include the religious dimension, Muslim and Christian, but it is national and ethnic in its essence. Thus there are competing claims for homeland.

Throughout this dissertation, I will draw on the data I gathered while working in Ramallah and Gaza City between January 2000 and September 2000. In my investigation and study of Palestine from the point of view of PLO returnees, I present two main arguments. The first, discussed in Chapter 4, 'Constructing the Homeland of Palestine' in which it is seen that homeland is quite different from a nation-state is that there is a difference between Palestine (the homeland) and the Palestinian state as it took shape after the Oslo agreement. The second argument concerns the Israeli occupation, and is dealt with in Chapter 5 and 6 dealing with 'The Return Experience' and 'Living in Ramallah and Gaza City - Notes from the Field and Discourses of Everyday Life'. There is discrepancy between the notion of a state and the lived reality in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian state is a political solution to the occupation of all of Mandated-Palestine by Israel following the wars of 1948 and 1967. This moves it from an extra-territorialized entity to a territorialized one. However, as the interviews with the returnees show, it is difficult to divide and re-name, even when the political leadership of the PLO negotiates on the basis of that division and renaming. Furthermore, the notion of homeland and all that it includes is quite different from a nation-state.

Though a political solution to the conflict over Palestine does include a two-state solution, a Jewish and an Arab state, initially based to the UN Partition Plan (Resolution 181) passed by the UN General Assembly on the November 29, 1947, this partition will not resolve the basic problem of colonizing the homeland. The colonization of Palestine, unlike any other colonization in the world, has come about with a promise from God to the 'chosen people'. The problem is that nationalism and forming a nation-state does not change what PLO returnees identify with. The Palestinian homeland in this argument is perceived as something that cannot be changed simply by political measures or the enforcement of a political solution. This view of homeland is a way of resisting the political discourse and the fact of occupation. In a sense, no outside view can change the inner experiences of PLO returnees and what they identify with in their memory and ideologies, even though they accept the two-state solution.

I will argue that the two-state solution for the lost territory of British-Mandated Palestine will not resolve the rift experienced by PLO returnees, and probably by other groups of Palestinians, although they do not represent the voice of all Palestinians. This rift is partly resolved by the creation of the state. However, the issue of the Palestinian homeland becomes larger than any state can accommodate. The two-state compromise of creating a Palestinian state with the pre-1967 war borders is a territorial resolution to a political claim on land, what is termed 'peace for land', a solution accepted by the majority of Palestinian political leadership.

This work supports the creation of the Palestinian state as the political solution to the political homeland. However, there are personal and cultural issues still to be addressed within the formula related to homeland. There is a rift in the Palestinian

consciousness caused by the creation of the state of Israel that has not been dealt with. The Israeli occupier has not claimed responsibility for the displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian populations, and consequently the creation of the refugee problem. Nor have the Palestinians dealt with the traumatic experience of dispossession and displacement. That process, I argue, will not be resolved by forming a Palestinian state.

The Palestinian homeland is a vision with a plurality of interpretation and experience. It reveals that there are within the one homeland, other homelands as well and hence different Palestines. A closer look into the experience of Palestinian returnees reveals that each individual experience is different. Each person can know his or her homeland differently. There is no one vision. However, there are certain common features that bring together the PLO returnees as a national group, and their notion of homeland. Within that, the vision of homeland is diverse. The question of homeland is omnipresent in Palestinian lives. This will be illustrated in detail in the ethnographic chapters.

There are three homelands in the one Palestine. First there is the personal homeland, which involves the process of personal experience. This is connected to the second vision of homeland, the cultural and social homeland that deals with collective history shaped by and intimately connected with community and family life. It involves the notions of space, place and landscape that are shaped in the cultural context. The conflict over Palestine emerges as a conflict over an occupied space and place, in a landscape transformed by occupation. Thirdly, there is the political homeland, which deals with the issues of statehood, dispossession, displacement, Israeli occupation of the

place and transformation of its landscape. These three Palestinian homelands are interconnected. The argument made in this thesis evolves out of understanding these three aspects of homeland as they are expressed and experienced by informants. The conflict regarding the Palestinian homeland is therefore about contested space, place, and landscape. Although there is a political aspect, these reveal the larger image of the conflict. This image goes beyond land, history, and memory. It speaks of an identity of a place and a group of people attached to it in their individual and collective memory.

The central political issue, which has not been resolved by the Oslo peace process, is the omnipresent **occupation** of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel. Furthermore, the recent situation in Palestine indicates that the issues unresolved by the Oslo Accord processes laid down the grounds for the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. The Palestinian homeland has been changed and re-formed by occupation, but the ideal remains alive, as my respondents indicated. Memory of place as homeland and the issue of **refugees** become the Palestinian presence on the map. The Jewish claim on the space and place of the Palestinian homeland has created the 'other'. The Palestinians have resisted this claim on their own space and in their vision of homeland, a vision that in and of itself means that no Palestinian state with borders will be able to change the ideal and the vision of Palestine.

Reality in the Middle East is complex, always changing. It is a constant process of negotiating the past with the present, and confronting a questionable future. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the international interest in the Middle East and is its most critical consideration. This thesis will investigate its multi-layered complexity. Homeland is a nebulous concept at the heart of the Palestinian question. It is connected

to the experience in exile and the return. It is also a part of the national project and the formation of a state on the 1967 land².

What does Palestine mean to Palestinians returnees. What does it constitute? What does it represent? What is the image of the political homeland? How was it known in exile? How is it experienced upon return? What are the issues in its lived reality? Where does it lie between the ideal and the changed reality? Is homeland only political? What is the personal and cultural homeland? This thesis will clarify why I believe that homeland and the state are two different things. Political answers do not resolve the issues emerging out of the Palestinian experience of dispossession and displacement. They do not resolve cultural notions or control the human experience emerging out of the loss of homeland

1.2 Description of Ethnographic Setting and Methodology

This research was conducted in Ramallah and Gaza City between January 2000 and September 2000. It was made possible due to the recent changes in the 'Palestinian question' and specifically, the signing of the Declaration of Principles, the Oslo Accord, between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. The signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993 between Israel and the PLO, allowed some PLO (leadership and cadres) to return to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Based on fieldwork experience, the official definition of a **returnee**, which will be considered in depth in Chapter 2, is understood by the PNA and the Israeli government

² The 1967 land is a reference to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem, which were occupied by Israel after the Six Day War in 1967 between the Arab states and Israel.

to be an official PLO-member who returned after the signing of the DoP, with prior Israeli authorization, to the territories given back by Israel to the PNA.³

The 'return' to Palestine is understood here within the very particular context of the PLO return. The return of the PLO is a conditional return the rules of which have been set by Israel. Therefore there is a difference between the PLO return and the return of refugees and other Palestinian groups. The highly problematical issue of the return of other Palestinian refugees is still under negotiation and has been postponed to final status negotiations. There is no law of return, other than the 1947 General Assembly Resolution 194 that guarantees the right of return for the refugees of the 1948 and 1967 wars to Palestine.

As a consequence of the DoP, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established as the embryonic Palestinian state. The Oslo Agreement accorded the PNA recognition by Israel and defined its nature and scope of authority. According to the Oslo Accord, the PLO returnees were authorized by Israel to return to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PLO returned to a divided homeland in the West Bank and the Gaza strip.⁴

According to a PNA official, in the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs in Ramallah, since 1993, there have been about 100,000 to 200,000 PLO returnees to the Palestinians territories, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including their immediate family members who joined them. The exact number of PLO returnees was not available in official published references, but estimates given by different informants range from

³ There is no official documented definition of a returnee, which is an interesting aspect to this process of return, and no official published numbers of returnees. Benoit Challand (2000), whose work was also focused on this category, found the same difficulty in obtaining a definition or numbers.

⁴ The West Bank looks liked Bantustans. It was separated from Gaza. Gaza was surrounded by barbed wires and Israeli borders. The Palestinians living in Gaza cannot leave Gaza except with permission from the Israeli authorities. West Bankers also cannot leave the West Bank without Israeli permission. Since mid-August, 2002, however, Israel has decided to evict Palestinians, mainly the immediate families of suicide bombers, from the occupied territory (*La Presse*⁴ (*Montreal daily newspaper*), August 13th 2002).

80,000 to 200,000 returnees⁵. The reason for these discrepancies is the highly politicized nature of return for both the PLO and Israel. Israel has the sole authority to determine and accept applications for return, and decide how many Palestinians are allowed to return to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁶

The PLO's return reconstituted the notion of return from the perspective of the state. The dream had changed. It was no longer about liberating all of Palestine but about forming a state on 22% of historic Palestine (Bisharat 1992), and it was no longer abstract. For the PLO, the dream of return is to clear the Israeli presence from the 1967 land and create a Palestinian state. The geographic return to all of Palestine was no longer on the agenda, because when the PLO signed the Oslo Accord, it accepted the fragmentation of Palestine, as it was known before 1948.

In the field, I also found that the role and behavior of the PNA and its officials played an important role in this new post-Oslo situation and the experience of return. The return of the PLO's cadres and some of its leaders, and the establishment of the PNA resulted in the creation of new divisions in Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Insiders referred to the returnees as the Tunisians⁷. There is a difference in the experience of Palestinian insiders (*Al-Dakhel*) and outsiders (*Al-Kharij*). Insiders are those who have remained in the West Bank and Gaza or those who left what is called the

⁵I asked each interviewee what they knew about the number of returnees. I had responses ranging from 30,000 as one respondent indicated, while others ranged between 100,000 to 300,000. This indicates that the numbers varied. Each respondent provided an estimate based on his/her knowledge.

⁶ For further information on returnees see www.shaml.org, article "Palestine Refugees at the Crossroad of 1996 Permanent Status Negotiations" by Uri Davis, "Reintegration of Palestinian Returnees" by Abbas Shiblak and "Reintegrating Returnees: Opportunities and Constraints" by Nicholas Van Hear.

⁷ The Tunisians is a reference used to describe those PLO members who resided in Tunisia before they arrived to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is used negatively to denote them as those who came from the outside.

1948 lands⁸ (now the state of Israel) and became refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Outsiders are those that left either in 1948 or 1967, and were displaced, deported and/or made refugees in other parts of the world. It is important to make this distinction because the focus of this research is on the Palestinians who were outsiders who now have emerged as the new-comers (Tunisians), also called returnees.⁹

The returnees brought many new problems and divisions that Palestinians had not dealt with before: divisions between returnees (outsiders) and residents (insiders), stereotypes, differential privileges and status, and power positions. The insiders felt that they had been let down. Some found themselves in lower positions in the PNA than outsiders. Alliances were formed between the top bureaucracy and local business class. Many PNA officials used their position for personal benefit. The experience of the PLO returnees was received with negativity and criticism by the insiders and even by other PLO returnees.¹⁰ Insiders and outsiders expected democratic practices, particularly by high-ranking PLO returnees. These expectations opened the leadership of the PNA to criticism, especially in the face of the frustrations of not getting any agreement with Israel.

⁸ The 1948 land or *Aradi il Tamanya wi Arbi'een* is a reference to two things. First, internationally it refers to the land division based on UN Resolution 194 (Partition Plan) which divided Palestine into a Jewish state on 47% and a Palestinian state on 53% of Mandated Palestine. After 1948, Israel expanded to occupy more than the 47% and now is occupying 78%. Internationally, Israel is accepted as a state on 78% of Palestine. In Oslo, the PLO accepted Israel on 78% of Palestine, and Palestine on the remaining 22%. However, according to Palestinians, the 1948 land is also a reference to the land of the refugees of the 1948 war. Palestinians use it also to refer to what is called Israel as an equivalent. According to some factions like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Israel is not recognized. They therefore refer to the 1948 land as Palestine. The use of the 1948 land term is also used to signify the Israeli occupation.

⁹ In the Palestinian territories, they are distinguished by the red-plated cars that belong to the returnees. Returnees, whether officials or employees working with the PNA, had the right to bring in a new car, and were exempted from paying customs duties on the first car purchased. The green-plated cars are for the public, including the 'insiders', and all others who do not belong to the PNA.

¹⁰ I have met PLO returnees who were critical of their own group especially the behavior of high-ranking individuals who misused, according to them, their powers in the organization.

In addition to the disappointments about power and place, insiders and outsiders were disappointed with the peace process. They were disappointed in their leadership and with Israel's continuing occupation, and their dissatisfaction increased after the signing of the DoP on September 13, 1993 and the final failure to reach an agreement at the Camp David Summit in July 2000. The returnees and insiders felt misled by Oslo and believed they were excluded from the decision process. Peace has been very deceptive. The atmosphere was filled with tension throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The process of state formation was in trouble. The prospect of an acceptable settlement was fading. Return was not seen or conceptualized as a return of victory, but was associated with the destruction and degradation of the national dream. Returnees did not come back to a sovereign state.

The concept of return has been lost as the right of refugees to return appeared more distant. The PLO return was not part of the refugee return. Palestinians were not exercising the right of return. What does homeland mean to people to whom homeland was a political movement that has disappeared by delivering them to a 'place'? The return process itself was not organized and managed well to help returnees be absorbed back into a new society. No groups or networks were established to bridge the gap between the insiders and returnees. The only thing that the PNA helped in was finding places for people to stay.¹¹

The returnees did not come back to a free country but to an occupied place. There was the loss of the warmth of exile inside the political movement experienced as comradeship, solidarity, the sharing of a common experience, and participation in a

¹¹ This is different from the situation in Israel where the Ministry of Absorption performs all the procedures for Jews to return.

national dream for the liberation of Palestine. The majority of the returnees lived in refugee camps in exile (*Al-Shatat*) in cities like Tunisia, Beirut and Damascus. In the Palestinian territories there were no cities in that sense, although Hebron, Nablus, and Ramallah have grown in population. There is no center of urban life, which provides variety of cultural/economic/social activities to compensate for the loss of membership in a large political solidarity and social movement. Returnees were coming to conservative, small towns, with the mentality of living in ghettos, disconnected from the outside, and living as an annex to Israel.

In addition, the physical landscape has been restructured. Palestinians are surrounded by huge blocks of Israeli settlements. The infrastructure has been inadequate for the past 30 to 40 years, and furthermore has been catastrophically damaged in the past two years.

Israel provides jobs, but at the same time the occupation limits cultural and economic development. Until August 1995, Israeli troops were everywhere in Ramallah and Al-Bireh (its sister town). However, the beginning of some urban life emerged in Ramallah and Al-Bireh. Institutions of the PNA, television, radio, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were increasingly present. NGOs after Oslo were helping to maintain a semi-urban existence but it was all-precarious, and it has since been destroyed, mainly since March 2002 with the Israeli military incursions in the West Bank. This was taking place while discussion of the vital issues in the negotiations, including refugees, borders, and East Jerusalem, was being postponed. What sort of entity is 'Palestine' in this equation? And what is it now with the PNA destroyed, with no security apparatus, and its economy in ruins?

How 'homeland' is experienced by returnees and how homeland is defined or articulated through the personal/cultural/political is concretized through specific, individual experiences and expectations. When barbed wires and soldiers surround Palestinian territories, when Israelis are constantly intervening at cross-points, controlling and enforcing their presence, the feeling that one is at home becomes questionable and problematic. The return of a revolutionary/nationalistic movement to its 'homeland' after being in exile for more than 50 years, has resulted in clashes at many levels, including clashes with oneself, with the insiders, and with the Israeli occupying forces. This is the setting in which the investigation of the concept of homeland in Palestine was conducted.

I used three types of methods during fieldwork. The main method used was semi-structured interviews. For all interviews, I had an outline of the major questions I wanted to ask (see Appendix V – Interview Questions). The main issue investigated was the notion of homeland and its relationship to the issue of return. The interviews focused on three main areas: the memory of leaving Palestine, life in exile, and the personal experience of return, including the adjustment back home and the issues they deal with. In using the semi-structured interviews, I gave some space to go beyond my questions when my informants found necessary to elaborate or expand the discussion.

I interviewed twenty-four PLO returnees who returned to the West Bank and Gaza after the signing of the Oslo Agreement in 1993. I established contact with individuals either directly by calling to introduce myself and make an appointment, or by networking with the people I came to know. In some cases, I was referred to prospective interviewees by my contacts. I interviewed an equal number of individuals from Ramallah and from Gaza City, approximately 12 in each. All the interviews were

recorded on tape, with the consent of the participant. They ranged in time from an hour to an hour and a half (see following table 'Informants Description').

Informants Description

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Place of Birth	Profession	Residence Prior to return	Schooling	Date& Place of Interview
1	Mohammed	63	Male	Gaza	General Director – Ministry of Planning	Germany	N/A	July 16, 2000 Gaza City
2	Ibrahim	48	Male	Gaza	Writer	Tunisia	N/A	September 25, 2000 Ramallah
3	Iman	63	Female	Jerusalem	Director at Police Force	Tunisia	N/A	July 17, 2000 Gaza City
4	Salim	47	Male	Lebanon	Ministry of Planning	Syria	Civil Engineer	July 22, 2000 Ramallah
5	Ameen	55	Male	Jaffa	Ministry of Supply	Jordan	N/A	July 16, 2000 Gaza City
6	Rami	44	Male	Zakariya	Writer	Jordan	N/A	March 2, 2000 Ramallah
7	Omar	58	Male	Dura-Hebron	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs	Jordan	Lawyer	September 3, 2000 Ramallah
8	Khalil	61	Male	Ya'abad-Jenin	Director - Ministry of Planning	Tunisia	PhD Industrial Economist	August 24, 2000 Ramallah
9	Sami	58	Male	Old Jerusalem	Caricaturist	Tunisia	N/A	June 27, 2000 Ramallah
10	Arafat	73	Male	Biteen	Retired political activist in Communist Party	Jordan	N/A	March 11, 2000 Ramallah
11	Ashraf	56	Male	Shifa Amr	Ministry of Planning – Economic Division	Tunisia	B.A. History	July 17, 2000 Gaza City
12	Mufeed	58	Male	Tab'oon-Haifa	N/A	Tunisia	Military Training with PLO	July 16, 2000 Gaza City
13	Muneeb	55	Male	Jerusalem	Director – Ministry of Trade	Tunisia	PhD Economics	June 29, 2000 Ramallah

14	Yasser	63	Male	Beit Dajan-Jaffa	Media and Cultural work with <i>Fateh</i>	Tunisia	N/A	September 24, 2000 Ramallah
15	Nour	50	Male	Gaza	Director – Ministry of Interior	Tunisia	PhD Political Economy	September 18, 2000 Gaza City
16	Nabila	55	Female	Gaza	Legislative Council Member	Tunisia	N/A	September 18, 2000 Gaza City
17	Safir	35	Male	Kobar	Writer	Jordan	N/A	September 11, 2000 Ramallah
18	2 Couples: Mira and Hadi; Amjad and Rima	39,51 42,59	Mira - Female, Hadi - Male, Amjad - Male, Rima - Female	Mira - Syria, Hadi - Akka, Amjad and Rima N/A	Mira - Ministry of Social Affairs, Amjad and Rima N/A	Tunisia and Beirut	Mira - B.A. Psychology	January 8, 2000 Gaza City
19	Hadi	51	Male	Akka	Director – Ministry of Planning	Tunisia	N/A	January 5, 2000 Gaza City
20	Jameel	49	Male	Haifa		Tunisia	N/A	September 16, 2000 Gaza City
21	Fatima	52	Female	Jordan	Director - Ministry of Social Affairs	Tunisia	N/A	September 17, 2000 Gaza City
22	Samira	53	Female	Damascus	Women Union	Tunisia	N/A	September 17, 2000 Gaza City
23	Said	64	Male	Beir El-Sabi'e	Writer	Qatar	N/A	September 16, 2000 Gaza City
24	Shukri	63	Male	Jaffa	Director of Political Parties, organizations and NGOs - Ministry of Interior	Tunisia	N/A	September 16, 2000 Gaza City

I choose the focus group for the research to be PLO officials holding different positions within PNA institutions such as ministers, deputy ministers, and director generals, and other employees. This segment represented the most homogenous body of returnees because they were all part of the PLO cadre, and their experience was very

similar in the diaspora. Their identity has been shaped by urban cosmopolitan experience in Beirut and Tunis.

They are a significant and unique group to investigate. First, they are a specific segment of the Palestinian population with a political experience mainly outside of Palestine. Secondly, their memory and identity is connected with Palestinian nationalism, which has as its objective the creation of a Palestinian state. Their memory is therefore partly selective and used to emphasize a political point of view. Thirdly, this group is the significant for the future of the Palestinians. They will be the ones to define the official and public notion of Palestine as homeland and the Palestinian state. Therefore, it is important in this stage, before the establishment of the Palestinian state, to know who will be defining the homeland. This may not apply in the present circumstances since the PNA itself is not functional and the Palestinian state is not yet established. However, it will serve in the long run to shed some light on future problems that may arise, as the states' view will probably conflict with the views of other Palestinian groups.

Due to their political positions it was difficult to reach informants. It took time to get to know people connected to some of my selected informants, and they helped in arranging the interviews. Other informants were unreachable even after three to four attempts. This can be indicative of the difficulty of working with a political group, because their identities may be concealed. Meanwhile, I searched for another way to meet them, whether through an organization that they belonged to or networks formed by PLO returnees. They had not organized such social mediums, not even to facilitate the

return process. The only way to meet them was in social gatherings in the homes of people I came to know closely, or by arranging for interviews.

In terms of the experience of doing anthropological fieldwork in Palestine, I had the advantage of being Palestinian in origin. I spoke in Arabic, with a Palestinian dialect. I was also familiar with the Palestinian question and situation. However, I had never been to Palestine. Fieldwork was my first experience of Palestine. I was asked by informants about my name and my origins in Palestine, as these are typical questions that Palestinians always ask when they meet for the first time. My being Palestinian, I believe, gave my informants a certain level of comfort.

Some of the disadvantages as a Palestinian woman coming from Canada, were that I was an outsider and did not know informants personally and a woman. In some cases, I had to emphasize my professional presence and work. This was part of dealing with individuals who are in political positions, and assumed their authority rather than the professional stand of a researcher.

To structure my interviews and the subsequent analysis, I borrowed from the analytical framework of life history. I was interested in extracting stories from my informants' life's and their living conditions after exile and after return. My interest in life narratives was to document the memories that were central in their life. Choosing personal narratives is supported in the literature by different authors. Appadurai (1991) asserts that the biographies of ordinary people are constructions or inventions of the imagination. This statement is true as social beings construct their reality. However, it does not mean that all biographies of ordinary people are a product of the imagination. There is the lived experience that is 'real' in people's lives as it is not solely a product of

their imaginings. Their particular memories, as selective as they can be, are also 'real' from their point of view. Samuel and Thompson (1990) support the use of oral narratives since they challenge accepted categories of history; however, they urge the reintroduction of emotionality and imagination into the metaphors of memory. This aspect of oral narratives will incorporate the subjective and the imagination as each individual recounts and constructs his or her memory. Memory construction and its connection with the formation of identity were of interest to this research.

Oral histories have been used by some researchers in Palestine looking at refugee camps (Farah 1999), women living in refugee camps (Sayigh 1998), and the politics of violence and male gender during the *Intifada* (Peteet 1994). Farah's (1999) research also supports the use of oral narratives and life histories. This method provided an avenue for Palestinian refugee voices to come out in a crucial political period. It shows that Palestinian popular memory continues to reconstruct notions of 'return'. She posits that memory of Palestinian villages and symbols of exile (the camp, refugee, return) have been silenced, and left out of official and power discourse in the post-Oslo era, but will be continually passed on through families and social networks. The question raised by this assertion is the role of memory and symbols of exile from the Palestinian National Authority (PLO officials and members) perspective; the official discourse. This is why I chose also life histories as a parallel method to the above-mentioned work. Life histories can portray the reconstructions from below and beyond nationalist discourse as individuals narrate their connection to their land of origin.

Rosemary Sayigh (1998) focused on women as transmitters of local histories juxtaposed against the national history transmitted by nationalists (resistance movement),

that exclude the local, gendered, and the personal. She argued that life stories of refugee women from low-income status do not merely 'reflect' national history; they offer materials for a more completed, more 'real' national history, one that is not necessarily focused on men, political parties, national elite but encompasses women, home, families, non-elite classes and various diaspora locales. As this research shows, it can also be said that reading national history from the mostly male and political perspective is not, perhaps, the same as reading of history as told by women. This might indicate that there are different ways of telling and of reading that might also differ across political class. Sayigh (1998) also suggests that the different ways of narrating the "self" reflect the multiple shifts of life experience. The idea that there are multiple shifts of life experience – the personal, social and cultural, and political - will be useful for this project, as there are in fact different dimensions of the self that need to be examined in looking at the process of returning to homeland. Furthermore, a striking feature of life stories of Palestinians is the primacy of the exodus from Palestine, as the "beginning". This is where the journeys of return begin for this research. This observation touches on the importance of life histories as a method of presenting PLO returnees' experiences.

In addition to the 24 interviews, the second method I used was narrative pieces of PLO returnees, written in Arabic. In the field, I researched the different works of return narrative. I found that Al-Karmel journal has dedicated a section and editions to the return experience. I selected certain samples by different returnees according to their relevance within the return discussion in chapter 5. I examined them, translated the desired text, and incorporated it within the text, among my other informants. These selected PLO returnees are writers. They focus on their personal experience of return and

their notion of return. I selected parts of those literary narratives as another source of information for the investigation of homeland and return in this dissertation. I have chosen to include parts of Mohammed's (1995 & 1997), Zaktan's (1997), and Khader's (1997) narrative because they express the range of ways in which return can be experienced. They also describe their personal visions and creative attempts at expressing their experiences of return. I integrated their voices with the narratives of my informants.

Reading these autobiographical essays and other similar narratives by other authors (Badr 1998, Barghouti 1998). I also gained insight that I used to write Chapter 5, on return. Each author presents his/her own experience of return, describing his feelings, ideas, questioning the return journey and the meaning of 'Palestine as homeland' to each one.

The third method I used was my participant observations in the field. I kept a journal to document the daily life in the Palestinian territories including social interactions and impressions I gathered on life in Ramallah and Gaza City, and used it in chapter five dealing with return, where I placed my observations of living under occupation, the role of the PNA, and the general social atmosphere.

1.3 Methods of Analysis

In the analysis of the data of this research, I started first by carefully reading the content of the interviews and my field notes. I indexed them based on subject and added a description. In addition, I ranked the subject in terms of relevance to the subject matter. The indexing that dealt with the notion of homeland, return, and the return experience were highlighted as most important. Following that was the topics connected to these

areas. The objective was to search for patterns emerging within the data that cut across all interviews, and also the differences from one interview to the next.

I was first looking for features in relation to the notion of homeland in Palestine. In that process, I noticed a lexical dimension to the notion of homeland particular to the Middle East and to the case of Palestine. This provided a particular view on homeland that involved looking at terms used, and what they signify.

In the process of organizing and reorganizing the data, I indexed it into the different categories that it represented onto the interviews themselves. I also indexed each category or theme on index cards, such as the homeland cards and the return cards. The particular categories that I applied on the data were 'observer-identified' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 211). These are definitional categories such as the notion of a personal, social and cultural and political homeland. They were not described as such by interviewees, but I was able to extract and formulate these new terms that according to my analysis the data was expressing. Though these analytical concepts that emerged from the analysis were beneficial for the process of synthesising the analysis, I also realized there were different sub-types within the general categories identified. I included these sub-themes within each general category and as such differentiated and connected them to the general category they belonged in.

This was also extended to the analysis of the notion of return and the return experience. The return narratives were perhaps the most challenging to categorize and organize because they were subjective experiences that expressed a range of ideas and feelings. However, I came to see that some expressed more disillusionment while others were more adapted to the new reality.

Furthermore, while attending to the different return experiences, I was able to categorize it into the different subsections or dimensions of that experience. These were return and occupation, return and the PNA, and return and social interaction and life in the West Bank and Gaza. These areas of focus were labelled as important as the data suggested and hence became part of the analysis.

The organization of the return experience began during fieldwork. In my field notes, I noted these areas of interest that I also used in the analysis. Therefore, particularly for the return experience and issues it involved, I developed an analysis of the fieldwork experiences. This was also used in the data presentation and analysis in Chapter 6.

1.4 Description of the Historical Setting of the Palestinian Question

Palestine is a relatively small geographic place, about 26.326 sq. km (Saleh and Mustafa 1987: 9). It is strategically located at the crossroads to Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is also home to the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Palestinians are the indigenous Arab people of Palestine. The majority of the population is Muslim, co-existing with Christian and Jewish Palestinians. Palestinian identity has changed over time, and some of its features have changed, to be replaced by other elements. There are about 3.3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and about 3 million living outside. They are a national group with a separate Palestinian identity that has been influenced by collective traumas and major political conflicts (Khalidi 1996:201).

They speak Arabic and have lived in an area that was part of the Fertile Crescent for centuries. They have a unique dialect that differentiates them from the rest of the

Arabic speaking groups of the Middle East. Each city and village in Palestine has its own dialect.

Palestine is a reference to a geographical place, based on the divisions made between Britain and France in the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1917. In this agreement, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were formed and divided. Britain was a protectorate over Palestine and Jordan, while France held power over Lebanon and Syria.

At present, Palestine is no longer on the world map as it was known prior to 1948. In the 1880s Jewish immigrants began to come to Palestine. These waves of Jewish immigration continued until 1947. The United Nations in 1947 voted to have two states in Palestine: a Jewish and Palestinian state divided into two territories. The Palestinians and the Arabs rejected this division. To the Palestinians, their homeland would be occupied by a foreign population and divided.

In 1948, the Jewish Agency established the state of Israel on the Jewish part of Palestine, based on Resolution 181. In the same year, the first Arab-Israeli war broke out. The Arabs lost that war and, as a result, lost what is called the "1948 land". This was called the "Nakba" – the Catastrophe. In 1967, the 'Six Day War' took place, in which the remaining territory not occupied in 1948 was occupied by Israel – namely, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Israel also occupied the Golan Heights, parts of Sinai, and South Lebanon. Israel therefore became a state on part of British Mandated Palestine, also referred to as 'historic Palestine'. The remaining territories referred to as '1967 land' became the Occupied Territories.

The Palestinian question emerged early in the 20th century when Palestine, now called Israel, became a British protectorate. The problem began in 1917 when the British

promised the Jews, in the Balfour Declaration, a homeland in Palestine. The motive was to find a home for the Jews, because of European anti-Semitism and a long and antagonistic history between Christianity and Judaism. As Europe sought a solution to the Jewish problem, especially after the Holocaust, the idea was to try to mend what happened, by creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine so they could have their own state. Jews have been Palestinian and have lived in Palestine alongside the Christian and Muslim Palestinians for many centuries.

The importance and the conflictual nature of Palestine in ancient and modern history are the subject of this study and of contemporary wars and conflicts. The Palestinian homeland has been scarred by violence, and has been religiously and historically marked as central to the three monotheistic religions. For the Palestinians, their homeland was taken over by colonial forces, first by the British and then by European Jews. Palestinian presence and their rights as the native inhabitants were not recognized. The two major wars in the Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1948 and 1967 have resulted in what is called the Palestinian diaspora. The homeland once known as Palestine no longer exists on the map. A homeland in Palestine therefore has been a problem for the Palestinians and the world since the late 1940s.

Throughout, the notion of Palestine will be used to refer to two things. First, it is the British-mandated map. Before Palestine came under British mandatory rule, it did not have borders. It was part of Greater Syria. Palestine was a region within Greater Syria. This is the map Palestinians recognize and refer to as Mandated Palestine, and interestingly it is the map recognized as historic Palestine. Second, I will use the word 'Palestine' to refer to the 1967 land, the so-called Occupied Territories. It includes the

West Bank (with East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. It is also the territory of the future Palestinian state.

1.5 Review of Relevant Empirical/Ethnographic Work on Palestine and Palestinians

1.5.1 General Background – Relevant Studies on Palestine and Palestinians:

The literature on Palestine and the Palestinians is extensive because of the internationalized problem of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, due to the limitations of this chapter, only the most relevant ethnographic and empirical work will be included. Connected to the issues of this research are the works on the Palestinian diaspora and its connection with its homeland. Other major areas of interest are exile, refugees, Palestinian identity, memory, landscape, history, and return.

The literature provides sociological, political, and economical studies on Palestine and Palestinians in general (Abdul Hadi 1997, Masalha 1997, Watzal 1999, and Benvenisti 1995). Said's (1992, 1994, 1995, 2000) and Farsoun & Zacharia's (1997) work are used as a major reference on the historical and political analysis of the Palestinian question and issues.

A large segment of the Palestinian nation is in exile (Abu-Lughod 1988) mostly abroad and in their own land. The dream of the Palestinian nation is to manifest itself onto the land of Palestine in the form of a state (Bisharat 1992, Baramki and Abdul Rahman 1999), and in the present this has been a critical demand to ensure the preservation of Palestinian identity.

Exile is connected to 'return' and identity. One of the features that characterize the Palestinians as a diaspora is the dream of return (Bowman 1999, Farah 1999, Tololyan 1996). Abu-Lughod (1988) identifies a problem in conceptualizing and

understanding the Palestinian experience of exile, and stresses the importance of the option of return for Palestinian 'exiles'. The dream of return is a pivotal component of the Palestinian refugee identity and experience, whether living in refugee camps or not, especially within their relationship to their homeland (Khalidi 1997, Farsoun and Zacharia 1997, Said 1995, 1992).

Farsoun and Zacharia (1997) deal with Palestinian identity. Rashid Khalidi (1997) discussed extensively and critically assessed the narratives that constitute Palestinian history and identity. They discuss the reasons Palestinian identity was maintained particularly after years of exile, dispersal, and domination of others from 1948-1967, and from 1967-2002 even following the Oslo Accords. In addition, and relevant to this thesis, is the vital role of the PLO and its different factions in developing Palestinian identity until 1982 (8). Furthermore, Palestinian identity has remained intact as it has

...asserted itself and survived against all odds, and in spite of the many failures...Dulles said in the 1950s that the Palestinians would disappear and Golda Meir spoke in 1969 as if they had disappeared, going so far as to declare that they had never existed in the first place. But they have not disappeared, and even their most determined opponents seem to have begun to reconcile themselves to this uncomfortable fact. For these opponents, whether Israel, or some Arab states, or the great powers, the nonexistence of the Palestinians would have made things considerably easier at various stages of history. But inconvenient though their identity often has been for others, the Palestinians have remained stubbornly attached to it (209).

Baramki and Abdul Rahman (1999) discuss the importance of Palestinian identity in connection with exile. They posit that Palestinian identity is built on a sense of belonging to the Palestinian 'homeland'. They also argue that the establishment of the Palestinian state is important to maintain Palestinian identity. Palestinian identity, which

is based on a sense of belonging to homeland, is an important component of this investigation.

1.5.2 Relevant Anthropological and Empirical Research

Interest in work on Palestinians in anthropology has emerged in the last 15 years. Nakleh (1977) warned of the tendency to focus on stereotypical topics in the anthropology of the Middle East: a particular focus on Arabs in Israel and the traditional village structure. There was a limited amount of anthropological work on Palestinians, but this has changed as more people have attempted to work with Palestinians, mostly in the West Bank. Examples of such anthropological endeavors are by Julie Peteet (1994, 1996) and Ted Swedenburg (1991).

Peteet (1996) investigated the use of graffiti as a form of resistance during the Intifada. She discusses the issue of agency and the negotiation of power in the context of occupation. Peteet (1994) also worked on the ritual of resistance within the Intifada. The ritual of violence as a rite of passage into manhood is a creative act of resistance and will. Her work shows how domination can be resisted in different contexts and also how the configuration of identity is connected to power dynamics.

Swedenburg (1991) performed extensive work on memory of the Arab Revolt of 1936. According to him, memory is constructed and may not be representing the 'truth' of the events that took place. His argument is that Palestinian memory cannot be understood alone but needs to be put into the context of the hegemony of Zionism and Western support of Israel.

The idea of the return of refugees was investigated by Farah (1999) in Al-Baq'aa refugee camp in Jordan. Whether it is a myth, or it is imagined, it is found to be 'real' in

the lives of Palestinian refugees. However, the dream of return is not necessarily an invariable one. Farah (1999) asserts that the Palestinian people are reproducing their subjective identities in the present, which shows that the central reference to express belonging to the 'nation' has been dismantled and new multiple references are emerging. Refugees are re-imagining the right of return/dream of return, giving it a new life amidst political processes that threaten to dismantle their dream of return. Farah's conclusion is very important to this research since it deals with the issue of the relationship of homeland and return albeit from the perspective of those who did not return.

Memory is a central notion in the literature dealing with the diaspora. Homeland is a place of memory, whether 'real' or constructed. The idea of the romantic vision of Palestine and its clash with 'reality' is part of memory construction and reconstruction. It is found to be central in investigating the experience of exile and return (Abu-Lughod 1988, Bowman 1999, Litvak 1994, Said 1999a, Said 1999b, Swedenburg 1991).

Memory and its relation to geography, and the vision of homeland have been dealt with by Said (1999a, 1999b). A discussion about the essence of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict dealing with the relationship between memory and geography/land is presented in the work of Said (1999b) and Boyarin (1996). Boyarin (1996) presents a series of meditations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict arguing that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a struggle for both land and history, space and time, where history is as basic to the two peoples' identity and security, as is land. Therefore, his work is relevant to the investigation of the notion of homeland. The Palestinian struggle, as much as it takes on a political form, it is about finding a place in history, feeling a sense of belonging, having

a 'home', and being able to have the same rights afforded to other nationalities such as travel and residency.

Considering Swedenburg's (1991) argument about memory being constructed, how Palestinians remember their past is connected to how they are 'remembered' and imagined in the West. Litvak (1994) asserts that the creation of a Palestinian national identity involves constructing a Palestinian past based on reality and imagination. This is for the national objective of developing a Palestinian collective consciousness. The national past serves as a primary producer of identity. The Palestinian national movement led to a construction of certain representations and views of the Palestinian past as it was in conflict with Israel and Zionism. The relevance of these studies to this research is to understand the underlying aspects of memory construction in relation to nationalist discourse.

Benvenisti (2000) deals with memory of the landscape of Palestine, a landscape that has been changed physically and its human component dispersed. He is critical of the acts of the Israeli state to erase the Arab landscape. Central to this is the belief that the metaphysical belonging to a landscape and the connection to 'homeland' belong only to modern people like the Israelis and not to Arabs. Arabs are labeled as an object and a problem in an equation of power. Israelis hold the dominant memory with the assumption that their memory is more valid than the Palestinians'.

The interplay between memory, place, and landscape is an important theme in this dissertation. Valuable work on the landscape of Palestine by geographers, and others will be used in the Chapter 4, to discuss the theoretical basis of the significance of landscape in the construction of homeland. This dissertation and the insight provided by these

authors, namely Falah (1999), Sabbagh (1999), Halaby (1999), Mitchell (1999), Said (1999b), Parmenter (1994) and Tuan (1977) will give a basis to be incorporated in the theoretical discussion and also into the ethnographic description.

Edward Said (1999b) notes that the landscape of Palestine is found in memories of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in different ways. He argues for an interplay between place, memory and invention that is particular to Palestine, “which instances an extraordinary rich and intense conflict of at least two memories, two sorts of historical invention, two sorts of geographical imagination...Only by understanding that special mix of geography generally and landscape in particular with historical memory...can we begin to grasp the persistence of conflict and the difficulty of resolving it, a difficulty far too complex and grand than the current peace process could possibly envisage, let alone resolve”(10-11). Said’s argument is relevant to the argument presented in this dissertation regarding conceptualizing homeland and the issues connected to the notion of homeland in Palestine, that are difficult to be resolved or understood in a political peace process.

Ghazi Falah (1999), a geographer, investigated the transformation of the cultural landscape of Palestine after 1948. His account and presentation are relevant to the concept of landscape, the notion of the social and cultural homeland presented in Chapter 4 and the appropriation of an Israeli landscape over the Palestinian one.

Karl Sabbagh (1999) and Halaby (1999) present an account of Palestinian landscape in film and Arabic art respectively. Sabbagh (1999) argues that for social and political reasons, the Palestinian Arabs and Jews are positioned differently in the landscape of Palestine. Halaby (1999) notes the relationship of a building to the space

around it and the notion of landscape is exemplified in the Dome of the Rock. Her discussion provides insight into understanding the centrality of the Dome of the Rock as it becomes a landmark of Jerusalem.

W.J. Mitchell (1999) asks for an interpretation of landscape that is particular to Palestine, which has known throughout its history many appropriations and destruction of its landscape. Palestine's landscape is an imperial landscape that deserves an understanding of its history, its memory, to conceptualize Palestine as a 'work of landscape art in progress'. It is not only that human intervention has manipulated its landscape, but the landscape itself has a perspective and a position regarding the remnants of violence and the different constructions on it.

Furthermore, the peace process that led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority and the 'returnees' phenomenon is relevant to this discussion. A detailed account is offered in the "Documents on Palestine" that presents a history of events and documents from the beginning of negotiations in Madrid until Oslo and all the declarations and sub-agreements that followed (Abdul Hadi 1997).

Critical views on the peace agreements such as Said's (2000) dealt with the 'after Oslo' era. There is a variance between the peace process and the reality of daily life, and application of the agreements. Said offers a critical perspective of the peace process and of the role of the newly established PNA (Said 2000). Hilal (1998) discusses the changes in Palestinian society and the political system after Oslo. This work is relevant because it describes the emergence of the PNA and how the changes in the present history of the national movement are moving it towards 'statehood'.

There has been little preliminary research on the topic of return migration of Palestinians and the problems in adjustment after return (Hammer 2001, Nour 1993, Aimbaid 2001, Tamimi 2001, Zureik 1997, Shaml Publications www.shaml.org 2001, Isolato 2001).¹² These works suggest there are different areas that can be studied in the return experience, taking into account its centrality in Palestinian national discourse.

Hammer's work dealt with the experience of return of second-generation returnees from both Arab and Western countries, with particular focus on the images of Palestine in the diaspora, and the role of memory and historiography in identity development. She argued that returnees are faced with reconstructing their identity and the decision of choosing Palestine as a homeland and/or place of residence or leaving.

Zureik (1997) studied the experience of the return of 30,000 Palestinians to the West Bank and Gaza after the Gulf War and their method of adaptation. His studies indicated that returnees adjusted well to their new life, the majority being happy to return. However, to most of the returnees, the bleak political and economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza were not considered a valid reason to return.

Tamimi (2001) worked with young Palestinian Americans and their process of adjustment after coming home. Her findings suggest that Palestinian-American youth are caught between two worlds - those of their parents and those of American society'. Palestinian-American women are faced with a bigger challenge, as they carry the responsibility for the tradition of their family and community.

AiMbaid (2001) investigated the theoretical relationship between migration and development, arguing that it can only be studied in its social, political, cultural, and

¹² The papers discussed here were mostly presented at the conference on 'Return Migration', in Ramallah 2001. These papers are works-in-progress, and have not been published yet.

historical contexts, which ultimately are a factor in the decision to migrate. Since return to Palestine depends on external factors, the nature of migration is affected. In addition, another issue would be the ability of the Palestinian state to absorb potential returnees.

The connection between Palestinians and Palestine as their homeland is central in the Palestinian identity, as argued repeatedly in the literature. However, Bowman (1999) posits otherwise; a return to Palestine was imagined as a moment where identities could be realized. He indicates that when all the dispersed Palestinians come together in a single place called Palestine, the different ways in which they learned to conceptualize themselves as Palestinians would make it difficult to integrate the different identities into one national community. Bowman (1999) argues that, images of who people are, are created in response to encounters with conflicts.

When, therefore, exiles return to what they envisage as their homeland what they most often end up doing is reestablishing once again the terrain of the exilic space in which they came into self-consciousness. A fundamental part of that space is the antagonistic other, and if that other has not followed them home from exile they have to find another to take its place, and this is the role so often imposed by the returning exile on those who remained in place (75).

This work is relevant in understanding the clash that took place between returnees (outsiders) and locals (locals).

Other studies focused on the relationship between returnees and locals, and their integration in society (Heacock 1999, Hear 1997, Jirbawi and Nofal 1999, Challand 2001). They discuss the identity clash resulting from the different Palestinian identities that developed in different contexts. From a political and social perspective, Heacock (1999) examines the relationship between the new Palestinian National Authority returnees referred to as the outsiders with the insiders. He discusses the clash of interest

between the inside and the outside, and how the Palestinian case resulted in two cultures (locals and returnees) in one nationality. He argues that it will take time for this division to break down and for the development of communication to be established between these two groups that have lived different experiences.

Challand's (2001) thesis on the relationship between the insiders and outsiders discusses the conflict emerging from the return of the PLO returnees (the Tunisians) as a space to contest legitimacy and symbolic authority. His work provides a political understanding of the issues arising within Palestinian society upon the return of the PLO cadres, which is important here as it will also be a part of the analysis in Chapters 6 and 7, which deal partly with these internal conflicts.

The so-called returnees have been accused of monopolizing the power and of controlling the allocation of resources, leaving the people who had been living inside the Occupied Territories (the insiders) with a scanty portion of the pie. This paper's argument is that the existence of tensions between the outsider and the insiders is stressed by persons who are left out of the centers of decision, be they strictly oppositional politicians (e.g. independents, PFLP¹³, DFPL¹⁴) or *Fateh*-members longing for more power. On the other hand, people who are part of these power centers will not only deny the existence of rivalries between the outside and the inside, but they will also try to use their dominant position to object to the idea of a division between the outsiders and insiders, to promote an assimilative discourse, and to further enhance their own material interests and status. Therefore, the concept of the outside or inside, like any identity, is a very flexible and adaptable, one that can be instrumentalized (3).

In conclusion, the brief overview of the chosen literature includes different topics and issues that are part of an investigation on Palestine and Palestinians. The number of inter-connected concepts and issues can only shed more light on an area that needs to be investigated. The anthropological studies and other related work connected to the subject

¹³ The PFLP is an abbreviation for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

¹⁴ The DFPL is an abbreviation for the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

of study here include work on exile, refugees, identity, memory, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, landscape, and return migration. Within the work on return migration and the connection between memory, history, and landscape, there has been very important preliminary work that is directly connected to this thesis.

However, after researching the different ethnographic work on Palestine and Palestinians, there is a vacancy in the literature that this research will begin to address. There has been no ethnographic investigation of the notion of homeland in Palestine, albeit Hammer's (2001), which is important for an understanding Palestinian identity, connection to Palestine, and the significance of the issue of return. In addition, though there has been preliminary work on return migration to Palestine, it is a newly emerging area of interest that requires more attention. This suggests the need for further work on the implications of return, the adaptation processes, and the resolution of the right of refugees to return.

Furthermore, the category of PLO returnees I chose to focus on, their return experience and its implications on the insiders and on defining the notion of the Palestinian homeland as the official one has not been addressed in the literature. This will compliment work such as Farah's (1999) on refugees, and other future investigation of other Palestinian groups.

1.6 Description of Chapters

The thesis is divided into 7 chapters. In the introduction, I have introduced the research question and argument of the thesis. I have also presented the ethnographic setting of the fieldwork and my methodology. Following that I have presented a brief description of the historical setting of the Palestinian question. In the next chapter

‘Palestine and Palestinians: Historical Setting’. I will present the recent history of Palestine, beginning with the Ottoman rule, British, and the occupation of Palestine by Israel. I will also discuss the peace initiatives. The third chapter is a theoretical chapter, divided into two main sections, one dealing with the notion of space, place, and landscape as it pertains to the discussion on homeland. This is followed by some thoughts about the nation-state and a critique of it. These two chapters, with the introduction, comprise the background for my ethnographic chapters. The first ethnographic chapter, Chapter 4, ‘Constructing the Homeland of Palestine’, deals with the notion of homeland. It will be divided into a lexical analysis of homeland in Palestine and an articulation of the notion of homeland. In the second ethnographic chapter, Chapter 5, ‘*Al-Awda*’ Return and ‘*Aideen*’ Returnees: Defining the Experience of Homeland, I deal with the notion of return and then present experiences of return from my interviews and an analysis of the different issues found regarding return. Finally, in Chapter 6, ‘Living in Ramallah and Gaza City – Notes from the Field and Discourses of Everyday Life’, I will present my observations in the field and discuss the return narrations describing the issues that returnees dealt with in the context of the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian authority, and social adjustments to living in Ramallah and Gaza City upon return. In the conclusion, I will sum up my argument for the thesis and present some insights on the issue of homeland in Palestine.

Chapter Two

Palestine and Palestinians - Historical Setting

This chapter presents an overview of modern Palestinian history and the significant moments at the local and regional levels, beginning with the Ottoman rule, and covering the British mandate over Palestine, the creation of the state of Israel, and the peace process between the PLO and Israel. I will simplify the history of Palestine to the most relevant issues and events that pertain to this research. The objective in this chapter is to present the historical background to the Palestine issue. In addition, I will provide a brief history of the colonial enterprise in the region and particularly in Palestine. Furthermore, I will discuss the events that led to the taking over of the Palestinian homeland, dividing it, occupying it. As a result of the creation of the Israeli state and the occupation of Palestine, there emerged a Palestinian refugee problem on a grand scale, with the expulsion and displacement of half of the native Arab population. The issues of homeland that come alive in the Palestinian experience have emerged out of the historical and political background of the conflict over Palestine.

2.1 Palestine – History of Relevant Issues

Palestine is important as a strategic geographic place primarily because of its location. It has a geo-political significance. It is at the crossroads to Asia, Europe, and Africa and hence it has great influence on the regions and the world. It is also the cradle of three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Its famous cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Nazareth, and Bethlehem have spiritual value for Jews, Christians and Muslims extending beyond Palestine and the Middle East. It became the Holy Land, with all its religious and cultural significance, for all three major religions.

The century-old conflict between the Arabs¹⁵ and Jews over Palestine is originally about who is the native of this land. Three peoples were central in the history of Palestine. These are the Canaanites, the Philistines, and the Israelites. The modern day Palestinians are descendants of the Canaanites, the Philistines, and other groups including the Greeks, Romans, and the Crusades who took up permanent residence in Palestine. The Canaanites are the first known residents of Palestine. They are believed to have settled around 3000 BC. The ancestors of the Israeli tribes came around 2000-1550 BC. Their prominent period is estimated to have begun around 1250 BC (Bright 1964: chapter 1-3). The Philistines came about 1175 BC. The modern name Palestine was from the Philistines (Cattan 1988:3-4) (Appendix I – Map 1 and Appendix II – Table 1).

The history of ancient Palestine includes many different kingdoms and rulers. What is of interest here is not the ancient history of Palestine per se, but the fact that both Arabs and Jews claim they are the original inhabitants of Palestine. This issue has been much debated; with the particular history of Palestine, almost anyone can make a claim to it. The purity of descent in an area that has known many different settling tribes, conquerors, and foreign settlement is difficult to trace. The decent of any group and the authenticity of ethnic origin is questionable. The biggest question for this thesis is that occupation of the space and place known as Palestine remains a major socio-political problem.

2.1.1 Ottoman Rule

Palestine fell to the Turkish conquest in 1517 (Cattan 1988:6). It was under Ottoman rule from 1516-1918. During the Ottoman period, Palestine was a part of Greater Syria. Greater Syria, also called the Levant, included Jordan, Syria, and

¹⁵ The term Arab is a broad word and it includes Muslims, Christians and Jews (Cattan 1988: 5-7).

Lebanon. The Palestinian did not view the Ottomans as occupiers; they did not confiscate land or displace people. They gave land to notables and feudal landowners to exact tithes and taxes.

2.1.2 European Domination

Before WWI ended, and as the Ottoman Empire began to be dismantled, Europeans were planning the best way to divide the Arab world amongst themselves. In the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain and France succeeded the Ottomans in controlling the Fertile Crescent. They invested in Arab resentment towards the Ottomans and promised to free them from their rule if they won their support. Those promises were not kept because of another secret agreement between the British and the French, the Sykes-Picot Agreement in May 1916 (Lesch 1984:32). In (Appendix I), Map 2 shows how the Sykes-Picot agreement carved up the former Ottoman Arab provinces based on British and French interests. This agreement divided the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into French and British-administrated and controlled areas. Palestine was to be internationalized. Iraq and Trans-Jordan would fall under the British mandate. Lebanon and Syria fell under the French mandate. This agreement dramatically changed the region politically, socially, administratively and culturally. After WWI, the League of Nations established the mandate system and gave Britain mandatory power over Palestine between from 1920-1948 (Appendix I - Map 3). The irony is that the contemporary recognized map of Palestine is the Mandate map.

To the present day, the legacy of the British Mandate remains in Palestine. This division did not take into consideration the nature of the region's existing borders, its

history and culture, or the approval of the indigenous populations. The new states of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq and Trans-Jordan were formed with territorial boundaries.

Before the Sykes Pikot Agreement, the regional map of 'Greater Syria', which was previously a part of the Ottoman provinces, included what are today Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Jordan. The cultural and administrative boundaries meant that Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese identity was a part of Greater Syria or The Levant. Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Jordanians of today all belonged to the regional area, Greater Syria. They still maintained a sense of local belonging, for example, Palestinians to their province or region of Palestine. However, what happened created more rigid boundaries.

The legacy of European domination in the region, aside from dividing it up into new nation-states, played a part in occupation of Palestine by other forces. On November 2, 1917, James Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, signed a letter addressed to Lord Rothschild, the Zionist leader. This letter came to be known as the Balfour Declaration.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet.

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this objective, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or in any other country'.

I shall be grateful if you would bring the declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours Sincerely,
 Arthur James Balfour
 (Cited from Farsoun 1997: 320)

The League of Nations incorporated the Balfour Declaration in the Palestine Mandate in 1922.

Palestinians protested against the Balfour Declaration. They held three national congresses between January 1919 and 1922, and send three delegations to London condemning the Zionist colonial aspirations in Palestine, and rejecting the Balfour Declaration. Their efforts were unsuccessful in preventing the Zionist plan (Tannous, 1988).

Though Palestinians represented a majority when the Israeli state was created in May 1948, European Jewish settlers had already begun arriving late in the nineteenth century (1880s). In 1918, Palestine's population was estimated to be 700,000 including: 574,000 Muslims, 70,000 Christians, and 56,000 Jews (Hadawi 1963: 13). In 1931, Arab population (including Muslims and Christians) totaled 1,033,314 while the Jewish population was 174,000. In 1946, the Arab population was 1,912,112 and the Jewish population was 608,225 (Said 1992:11) (Appendix I - Map 4) In 1918 the Jews owned 2% of the land (162,500 acres) out of a total land area of 6,580,755 acres. By the end of the British Mandate in May 1948, the Jews owned 5.67% of the total land area and Arabs held 47.79% (3,143,695 acres) (Hadawi 1963:18) (Appendix I - Map 5). The objective of the Jewish Agency in cooperation with the British was to transform the demography of Palestine. Immigration and land ownership were used to create a Jewish majority (Khalidi 1984:85-86) (Appendix I - Map 6). The demographic issue is to the present day an issue of the Israeli state.

Though there were many forms of protest against Jewish immigration and settlement, the main ones took place in 1920, 1921, and 1929. These were also against the British Mandate for supporting Jewish immigration. However, the revolt of 1936-1939 came to be the most important event in Palestinian history and memory and one of the longest strikes. The rebellion had many causes including the escalating number of peasants owing debts to urban merchants and moneylenders, British support of the Zionist settlement in Palestine, and the considerable increase in Jewish immigration (Khalidi 1997, Tannous 1988). Jewish immigration rose from 9,553 in 1932 to reach 30,327 in 1933. In 1935, 79,000 Jews arrived in Palestine (Tannous 1988:167). The rebellion failed, with the help of British repression.

2.1.3 The UN Partition Plan of Palestine

In September 1939, WWII broke out. Although Britain was the patron of the Zionist movement, the Zionists turned to the US as it was coming to be the new world power. By 1945, the US took over as the new supporter of the Zionist project (Khalidi 1984:236). In 1947 a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was formed to find a solution to the Palestine Question. On The 29th of November 1947, the UN General Assembly passed the UN Partition Resolution 181 (Appendix I - Map 7 and Appendix IV- Resolution 181). The partition resolution proposed to divide Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state, with Jerusalem as an international zone under UN administration. The Jewish state was granted 56.47% of the land and the Arab state 42.88%, with 0.65% for the International Zone of Jerusalem (Hadawi 1963:24-25). The Palestinians and the Arab Governments rejected the Partition Plan. The Jews accepted the proposition.

In the divisions proposed by the Partition Plan, the Jewish state would be on the most fertile land in Palestine, including the Huleh basin around Lake Tiberias and the coastal plains along the Mediterranean. The Jewish state also had al-Naqab or the Negev in south Palestine, which provided the Jewish state with access to the Red Sea. On the other hand, the Palestinian state was given the arid and hilly parts of Palestine, with the Palestine villages and towns roughly divided by the new borders (Tannous 1988:421).

2.1.4 The Creation of the State of Israel (1948) and the First Occupation of Palestine

We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. In considerable areas of the country [the total area was about 6 percent] we bought the land from the Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you, because these geography books no longer exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal, [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat – in the place of Jibta, [kibbutz] Sarid – in the place of Haneifs and Kefar Yehoshua – in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population (Moshe Dayan, in *Ha-Aretz*, April 4, 1969; quoted in Said 1992:14).

The year 1948 is a year of two different historical events, occurring, alas, at the same moment. For the Palestinians it is the year of *Al-Nakba* or the 'Catastrophe', denoting the period when Palestinian land was taken over, the establishment of the state of Israel by the Zionist settlers, and the beginning of *Al-Shatat Al-Falastini* or Palestinian diaspora. Palestinians in great numbers began to flee after the armed clashes and attacks on Arab villages. They were terrorized out of their homes and lands during the six-month period between the UN Partition Plan and the establishment of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948 (Hadawi 1963:35-36).

Only after the withdrawal of the British and the establishment of the Israeli state, did Arab armies enter Palestine. During the war of 1948, approximately 418 villages were destroyed and depopulated, including a number of cities and towns mainly Acre, Beersheba, Baysan, Lydda, Majdal, Nazareth, and al-Ramla. Safad and Jaffa, with exclusively Arab population, were depopulated of the majority of their Palestinian inhabitants. This happened also to Tiberias, Haifa, and West Jerusalem. All these cities lost the majority of their Arab inhabitants. All the assets of the Palestinian population, including the most personal ones were seized by the Jewish settlers (Khalidi 1992:xxxix-xxxii) (Appendix I – Map 5 and Appendix II – Table II).

Of great relevance to what happened to Palestinian territory is the transformation of its landscape. Most of the names of the main cities, even after being Hebrew-ized, maintained their original names like Jaffa and Haifa. However, most of the villages that were eradicated from the map remain unknown. What remains at the site of these villages are vestiges of a well, or a house wall, or a cactus plant. These villages were replaced by Jewish settlements. An example of this would be the village of Saris which became the Jewish settlement of Shores.

A dozen (villages) or so, though depopulated, were spared or suffered only minor damage. The rest were either totally destroyed or virtually so. They have literally been wiped off the face of the earth. The sites of their destroyed homesteads and graveyards, as well as their orchards, threshing floors, wells, livestock, and grazing grounds were all parceled out among Jewish colonists that had been their neighbours or among new ones established afterwards on the erstwhile village lands. The Hebrew names of these latter have replaced their Arabic predecessors, sometimes faintly and mockingly echoing them (Khalidi 1992:xxxii).

The refugee problem was created after the war of 1948 and resulted in 390,000 rural refugees, 254,000 urban refugees, and 70-100,000 Bedouins who were displaced to

the West Bank, Gaza, and neighboring Arab countries. The rights of refugees included the right of return to their homes and not 'homeland' and compensation. Compensation and restitution of property are not a substitute for return, whether the refugee chooses to return or not. About 6 million dunums of Palestinian land was appropriated (Khalidi 1992:xxxii-iii). The people did not abandon their villages and cities in April-June 1948 until the military attacks by the Haganah and other Jewish forces, as Palestinians did not leave prior to the Jewish attacks (Morris 1987:130-131) (Appendix I - Map 8).

Ever since their dispossession in 1948, the Palestinian refugees have not been allowed to return to their land. However, any Jewish immigrant coming from any part of the world is given his Israeli citizenship (under Israel's Law of Return). This policy led to the UN General Assembly, on the 10 of November 1988, to equate Zionism with racism (Cattan 1988:212). In addition, there are many UN resolutions and recommendations that called for the right of return of Palestinian refugees. In 1949, the United Nations adopted resolution 194 that allows all refugees to return and/or receive compensation. This resolution is central in the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

Resolution 194(III) in article 11¹⁶:

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage of property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible; Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations.

¹⁶ For the text of UN Resolution 194 see Appendix IV.

2.1.5 The Six Day War (1967) and The Second Occupation of Palestine

In 1964, the PLO (*Fateh*)¹⁷ was established in Egypt but not until 1974 was it recognized as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian presence in Arab countries since 1948 was equally unsettling. Their presence in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan - the major sites for refugee camps - was feared and during the years caused considerable unrest. This made the Palestinian problem a threat to the whole Arab region, a major cause for Arab nationalism and popular movements. It was also used by Arab states to pursue their own interests. Jordan is the only country that granted citizenship to the Palestinians as well as a temporary residence. Palestinians differentiated themselves from other Arabs in their own countries, or were marginalized out of fear of their growing power (high rate of education, entrepreneurship, and political awareness). In the end, the Palestinians were considered to be foreigners.

Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under the Egyptian and Jordanian administration. This situation changed after 1967 (Appendix I – Map 9). In 1967, the six-day war, *Al-Naksa* (The Disaster), took place. By June 1967, Israel occupied the remainder of Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip), Sinai in Egypt, the Golan Heights in Syria, and the South of Lebanon (Appendix I - See Map 10). The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 242 demanding the Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied after the 1967 war. Israel did not conform with this resolution or with other resolutions passed by the UN regarding Israeli violations (Appendix IV – Resolution 242). With the defeat in the 1967 war, the PLO had more political power and military strength, at the same time knowing the Palestinians could not depend on Arab

¹⁷ *Fateh* means conquest or opening. It is a reverse acronym for the Palestine Liberation Organization. “It is one of the earliest, largest, and dominant political-guerrilla groups constituting the PLO.” (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:344). Yasser Arafat has been the leader of *Fateh* since 1968.

governments to help liberate their land. By 1970 the PLO emerged as a strong force in Jordan and eventually clashed with the Jordanian army. It was defeated and eventually was expelled to Lebanon, where it would create a new base. On October 1973, another Israeli-Arab war took place. However, the Arab governments did not succeed in defeating Israel and helping the Palestinians. The American and European military support made Israel's victory inevitable (Heikal 1996:192-195).

On October 1974 the Arab League recognized the PLO as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'. Well-established as a quasi-state in Lebanon, the PLO had a political, economic, cultural and military infrastructure. On June 4, 1982, Israel, which had been attacking Lebanon since the mid-seventies attacked again when Ariel Sharon, Israel's Defense Minister at the time, sent a large army to attack Lebanon that reached the capital, Beirut. By mid-September 1982, Israel's military campaign culminated in attacks on the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps. This was made possible with Israel's Lebanese allies 'the Phalangists'. The Sabra and Shatila Massacres, in which tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees were killed, would become a landmark in Palestinian memory.

After the Israeli invasion, the PLO was in total destruction and had to leave Lebanon. It took refuge in Tunisia. On December 1987, the Palestinian first *Intifada* erupted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip opposing the occupation. The alliance of power began to change with the *Intifada*; Israel was internationally criticized for going after stone-throwers. However, the *Intifada* was not successful in ending the occupation or the Israeli oppression, or preventing the establishment of Jewish settlements that kept growing. It did, however, pave the way for initiating peace talks.

2.2 Description of the Current Political Context

2.2.1 The Peace Process: The Oslo Accord (Declaration of Principles) and Others¹⁸

As early as 1988, significant events led to a change in Palestinian and Arab policies that would eventually lead to the Oslo Accords. In 1988, in Algiers, the Palestinian National Council convened and declared the establishment of the independent state of Palestine, based on the UN Partition Plan in 1947 (Resolution 181). This meant that the PLO accepted a two-state solution.

On October 30th 1991, the Madrid Conference was held. It was an international effort to help find a solution to the conflict in the Middle East. Washington and Moscow issued the invitations. Up until 1993, Israel did not recognize the PLO as a separate entity and refused to hold any negotiations with its members. However, it did see it as part of a Jordanian-Palestinian team. Following the Madrid Conference, there were several meetings in Washington, in which the Israelis dealt with the Palestinians as part of the Jordanian team. These negotiations did not lead to any agreement. The Palestinian delegation including Hanan Ashrawi, Faisal Al-Huseini and Haidar Abdel-Shafi were from the 'inside' i.e. the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The attention they drew in the media surpassed that received by the PLO and Yasser Arafat in Tunisia (Haikal 1996:431). Arafat eventually felt vulnerable in his secondary role, as other Palestinians negotiated on behalf of the Palestinians. In addition, his position was already weak militarily after he was forced to leave Lebanon. Financially, he was almost destroyed, particularly after his support of Iraq during the Gulf War. The only way, considering his weak position and of the PLO's, was to change course for another solution and to reach a deal under his

¹⁸ For the full texts of all agreements signed see www.arts.mcgill.ca/MEPP/PRRN/prdocs.html and www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo.

banner. In 1993 at Oslo, the PLO secretly reached an agreement with Israel. Arafat had made concessions in that secret deal without the knowledge of the delegation negotiating in Washington.

The Oslo Accords were released very late in 1993. Israeli and PLO negotiators met in Oslo, and reached a final agreed draft of the Declaration of Principles. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO official Mahmoud Abbas signed it at White House ceremony. This was received by mixed reactions from the Palestinians, Arabs, Americans, Israelis, and Europeans. There was shock because of the sudden change in PLO policy. Israel gave up nothing, except an acceptance of the 'PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people'. As Edward Said expressed it, "By contrast, Arafat's recognition of Israel's right to exist carries with it a whole series of renunciations: of the PLO Charter; of violence and terrorism; of all relevant UN resolutions, except 242 and 338, which do not have one word in them about the Palestinians, their rights, or aspirations; by implication, the PLO deferred or set aside numerous other UN resolutions (which, with Israel and the United States, the PLO is now reportedly undertaking to modify or rescind) that have given Palestinians refugee rights since 1948, including either compensation or repatriation" (Said 1994:xxx).

The Declaration of Principles (DoP)¹⁹ declared on September 13, 1993, granted mutual PLO-Israel recognition and required Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho (Appendix III – Declaration of Principles). Its major accomplishment was that the Palestinians, when signing the Oslo agreement, "agreed to accept 22% for a Palestinian state and recognize Israel within the remaining 78% of the historic Palestinian

¹⁹ The Declaration of Principle of the Oslo Agreements formed the basis for the Oslo peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

homeland” (www.gush-shalom.org). It also gave the foundation for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) also called the Palestinian Authority (PA)²⁰, a regime in favour of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for a transitional period of five years (Appendix II– Table 3). The PNA would govern Palestinian affairs in the self-rule areas. It was subject to the agreements signed with Israel and as such had no foreign relations powers. It would be responsible for negotiating the permanent status issues towards a final settlement with Israel.

The Declaration of Principles also provided the framework for the Interim Period, (the negotiations to come). It promised to begin the final status talks in the beginning of the third year of the interim period (Appendix II- Table 4). The five-year transitional period was to begin with Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, culminating in the transfer of authority in most of the rest of the West Bank. Following this period, a permanent settlement would be reached on the issue of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, security arrangements, borders and other matters of common concern.

With the DoP, there were many issues that were left unsettled, including the road between Gaza and Jericho and the borders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The agreement gave back 80% of the West Bank and Gaza. However, in 1999, Israel handed back only 18% of the Occupied Territories.

Following the Oslo Agreement, the Gaza-Jericho autonomy agreement came into effect on May 4, 1994 (Appendix I – Map 11). It was also referred to as the Cairo Agreement or the Oslo I Agreement. Its objective was Israeli military redeployment from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, while still maintaining control of the settlements and military

²⁰ The PNA or PA is the name of the governing authority of the Palestinian autonomy created under the Oslo Agreements.

locations, and involved the transfer of civil affairs to the PNA. This was the beginning of what is called the Interim Period of Self-Government Arrangements. It was supposed to last until May 1999.

On August 29, 1994, the Early Empowerment Agreement came into effect. It dealt with the transfer of power and responsibility to the PNA in areas that were not discussed in Oslo I. This included education, cultural, health, social welfare, direct taxation, tourism and others. On September 28, 1995, Oslo II or the Taba Agreement was signed (Appendix I - Map 12 & 13 and Appendix III). It included provisions for further Israeli withdrawal. It divided the West Bank and Gaza Strip into three geographical zones: Areas A, B, and C. Area A consisted of 3% of the total area. It included Gaza, Jericho (which was taken in May 1994), Jenin, Qalqilya, Tulkarem, Nablus, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. "Israeli troops there are to be redeployed over a period of no longer than six months to just beyond the near suburbs, or in a ring around the cities roughly 1 to 2 kilometers out, in stage from those in the north to the other in the south (except in the cities of Hebron, where the Israeli military will continue to be deployed over 25 percent of the heart of the city to 'protect' the 400-500 Israeli settlers in the midst of about 150,000 Palestinians, and East Jerusalem" (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:266). In Area A, the PNA has sole jurisdiction and security control, but Israel still retains authority over movement into and out of these areas.

Area B was about 27% of the West Bank; it was where two-third of the West Bank population resided. It included 450 villages and towns in the rural areas (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:266). The PNA had civil authority and responsibility for public order, while Israel maintained a security presence and 'overriding security responsibility'. Area

C included the remaining 70-73% of the West Bank and was to remain under total Israeli control. It was made up of Israeli settlements, military locations, state land, and roads.

The Netanyahu Government on January 15, 1997 signed the Hebron Agreement. Within this agreement, Israeli would withdraw from 80% of Hebron. It would still maintain control over the area where the 400 or so settlers and 20,000 Palestinians lived.

On the 23rd of October 1988, the Wye River Memorandum was signed (Appendix I - Map 10). The goal of this agreement was the implementation of Oslo II. It also involved further Israeli redeployment from 13% of the West Bank if the PLO made changes to its charter. It also agreed to open an airport in Gaza City, create a safe passage, *Al-Mamar Il-Amin* connecting the West Bank and Gaza Strip, fight terrorism, and release Palestinian prisoners.

On the September 4, 1999, the Sharm Esh-Sheikh Agreement was signed (Appendix I - Map 15). Its objectives were the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum, resuming the final status discussions, Israeli withdrawal from 11% of the West Bank in three stages, the opening of the safe passage²¹, and the release of 350 prisoners from Israeli jails.²²

Between July 11th and 24th 2000, the U.S. President Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PNA Chairman Yasser Arafat met at Camp David to negotiate a final settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict according to the Oslo accords. Barak, Israel's prime minister came in with what was called 'Barak's Generous Offers' to the summit. The Oslo Agreement had given 22% for the Palestinian state and 78% for Israel, Barak was not happy with that. In the Camp David Summit he proposed:

²¹ See Map 11, 12, 16 for safe passages.

²² For a map on the West Bank and Gaza Strip before the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, see Appendix I - Map 16 and 17).

...that 69 Israeli settlements, populated by 85% of the West Bank's settlers, would be annexed as blocs to Israel. Palestinians would thus be expected to relinquish another 10% of their 22%. The settlement blocs intrude into the existing road network that links the main Palestinian population areas, and would severely disrupt any aspect of daily life in the West Bank that required travel. 'Temporary Israeli control' was a unique concept that showed its face during the talks. It suggested that a foreign power, Israel, would control the sovereign land of another nation, the Palestinians, for an indefinite time. These areas...contain many settlements populated by the most extreme Jewish religious zealots. Gush Shalom noted that this would make it highly unlikely that Israel would evacuate them '[even] in 50 years time' (www.gush-shalom.org).

Arafat did not accept Barak's offer. The negotiations ended with no agreement (Appendix I - Map 18).

Following the collapse of the Camp David talks between Palestinians and Israelis in July 2000, and the following outbreak of violence on September 28, the two sides nevertheless agreed to continue talks during December and January 2001. Late in January, they met in Taba, on the Israeli Egyptian border. The government of Israeli Prime Minister Barak had but a few days of life left before the election that brought Ariel Sharon to power. The meeting resulted in the Taba Agreements. What changed in the Barak proposal was the 'temporary Israeli control' zones. The Palestinians agreed to negotiate based on the Taba map. However, Barak was losing political credibility in the polls and his defeat was imminent. In February 2001, Ariel Sharon was elected as Prime Minister of Israel to succeed Ehud Barak. In 1982, Sharon was Israel's Defense Minister. Palestinians remember him as the man responsible for the Sabra and Shatila Massacres when Israel invaded Lebanon. His past history is memorable to the Palestinians since he was the Minister of Defense when the Sabra and Shatila Massacres in Lebanon occurred.

2.2.2 Support and Criticism of the Oslo Accords

The Oslo agreement, despite the Western official and media excitement, were receiving mixed reactions from Palestinians, the Arab populations and, Arab governments were quite critical. PLO officials were also divided in their positions regarding the Oslo agreement.

Political positions regarding the agreement and its consequences are highly polarized and have become hardened and more divisive over the years. The controversy over the original accords, the flawed course of their implementation, and the political developments since the signing threaten, perhaps for the first time since 1948, to destroy the political unity of the Palestinian people (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:256).

The Oslo Accords according to Chairman Arafat and his supporters in the PLO maintained that the accords were the best compromise they could make, considering the international and regional situation particularly after the Gulf War in 1990. Their main arguing point was 'What is the alternative?' Though the Oslo Accord was an ambiguous document that kept Israel in control to decide the fate of the peace process and further agreements, and conceding that it was an unfair agreement, it still allowed the Palestinians a footing in their homeland to pursue the struggle for self-determination and hence statehood (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:256).

Walid Khalidi, a Palestinian scholar and academic, summarized the achievements of the Oslo accord for the Palestinians:

(1) Recognition of the PLO by Israel; (2) recognition of the PLO by the United States; (3) establishment of the principle of Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestinian land; (4) establishment of the principle of more than municipal elections – a central Palestinian authority emerging out of general elections that would have legislative powers and a strong police force; (5) establishment of the principle of a timetable for accomplishing the above; (6) the transfer of powers to the Palestinian authority; (7) establishment of the provision of funds by world powers (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:257).

However, the agreements could not “extract Israel’s recognition that it is an occupying power in the occupied Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem. These agreements put in jeopardy any sovereign prerogatives to which the Palestinian people were entitled” (Maksoud 1995:119).

There were multiple issues that were not dealt with. Israel had sovereignty, controlled borders, security, and distribution of water resources. The right of return of refugees was abandoned when the state of Israel was recognized, and when the refugee question was not a key part of the negotiations. Jerusalem was declared the eternal capital of Israel. There were no talks about withdrawing from occupied East Jerusalem during the 1967 war. The Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza were under Israeli protection. Israel would withdraw from other areas after the Palestinian elections, but would maintain control over borders, main roads, and the Jewish settlements (Haikal 1996:453). Moreover, the division under Oslo II of the West Bank into three areas caused great criticism. On the territorial level, there was “no territorial continuity between the Palestinian areas in the West Bank, which are cut off from each other, from Gaza, and from Jerusalem” (Karmi 1997:200). To go to the West Bank and Gaza, everyone has to go through Israeli and Palestinian security checks. Therefore, Palestinians will struggle with moving between the areas of the PA or within their future Palestinian state. This is compounded by the fact that in order for Palestinians to move between these areas, they must pass Israeli land. Israel ultimately had the upper hand in deciding who would enter the territories. Israel would also maintain its military rule over territories not under PNA control (Haikal 1996:454), while the PNA would be of assistance to Israel in preserving security.

There were other issues with this agreement, which will be addressed throughout the thesis. The PLO that was engaged in the Palestinian struggle has changed from an organization with the objective of liberating Palestine through armed struggle into a political organization with the objective of reaching a peace agreement with Israel. The idealized *Fidayeen*²³, fighters were transformed into members of the PNA police and security force, whose main objective was to control any opposition to Arafat and the peace negotiations. The objective of the new political structure was now to build state institutions and economic infrastructure on the divided territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This was the seed for an economically and politically dependent Palestinian state.

Economic dependence on Israel now became a major criticism of the agreements. The impact of the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip created a state of almost complete dependency. It limited the number of Palestinians working in Israel and hence affected their incomes. It also affected the trade exchange and production levels, and increased poverty in the Palestinian territories (Roy 1999). As Roy explains, "Between 1993 and 1997, the West Bank's share of Gaza's total sales fell by half, from 96.4% to 48.2%" (Roy 1999:75). These facts, in addition to the criticisms of the PNA amongst Palestinians, became part of the present day *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. The *Al-Aqsa Intifada* was not only against occupation.

Though it appeared in the media that there was a peace agreement being enforced on the ground moving towards the two-state solution, the major issues of land, refugees, Jewish settlements, water, and East Jerusalem were unresolved. The question that needs to be asked is why did the PLO sign this agreement that appeared to be giving 'peace,

²³ Freedom fighters

stability, and sovereignty' for the Palestinian population. The Gulf war of 1991 and the situation of Palestinians (some 300,000 living in Kuwait) made the PLO weaker financially, politically, and militarily. The Oslo accord was not made between equals. Israeli had the power (financially and militarily), and the support of the U.S. and other Western powers, while the PLO was bankrupt.

Since the signing of Oslo in 1993, Palestinian compromises did not lead to any tangible changes on the key issues of the Palestinian national struggle. First, there was the issue of sovereignty in terms of territorial, political, and economic independence from Israeli control. According to Oslo, the land, its resources, the Palestinian economy and Palestinian liberty of movement were under Israeli control. Secondly, Israel refused to discuss the withdrawal from occupied East Jerusalem. Thirdly, and most important of all the unsettled issues is the refugee question, especially the 1948 refugees who are still in refugee camps around the Arab world. Some 30-40% of the refugees are still living in the UNRWA camps from 1948 and 1967. These refugees, according to Israel, have no right to return. Israel calls for their resettlement in Arab countries.²⁴

2.2.3 *Al-Aqsa Intifada* - September 29, 2000

In light of the unresolved final status issues covered in the media in the ongoing meetings between the PLO and Israel, in September 2000 *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began, as a response to Sharon's visit to *Al-Aqsa Mosque* in East Jerusalem accompanied by 1,000 soldiers. Because Sharon was associated with the Sabra and Shatila Refugee camp Massacres in Lebanon, his visit to the *Al-Aqsa* area was symbolic. It was a warning from the Israelis to the Palestinians, and the reactions to such a visit could have been

²⁴ For further discussion on the Oslo Agreement and violations, see www.gush-shalom.org, 'Who is Violating the Agreement?', a research paper dated January 28, 1998.

anticipated. Moreover, by the year 2000, the West Bank looked like Bantustans (Appendix I- Map 19).

Following the failure of the Camp David Summit in July 2000, the conflict entered a new phase, with the re-emergence of violence inside the Palestinian territories and Israel proper. Hamas and Islamic Jihad were engaged in an escalation of suicide attacks or martyrdom attacks, along with a faction of *Fateh, Kata'ib Shuhada'a Il Aqsa*, 'Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades', both targeting Israeli soldiers and civilians. Israel retaliated to this new wave of attacks in the largest military operation since its invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

In February 2001, Sharon was elected as the new Prime Minister, though he was known for his violent past regarding the Palestinians. His election was a result of the fear of terror by the Israeli public. Throughout his history, Sharon has supported the use of force with the Palestinians and after his election further implemented his aggressive policies. The Israeli military under his orders reoccupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip and virtually made the Palestinian population prisoners in their cities and towns.

Bulldozers destroyed houses and plowed under olive groves. Israel often responded to acts of terror by punishing people who had not committed the terror, using F-16s to destroy Palestinian Authority police buildings and shelling other sites from naval ships...The siege has wasted the Palestinian economy increasing unemployment levels to 35 percent in the West Bank and 50 percent in Gaza. A World Bank report at the end of March said Israeli restrictions had brought the Palestinian economy close to collapse. If the restrictions continue, the bank's director for the area, Nigel Robert, said, 'helplessness, deprivation, and hatred will increase' (Anthony Lewis 2002 in www.peacenow.org).

Palestinians civilians were targeted in increasing numbers, ambulances were targeted, and the wounded needing medical attention did not receive medical attention. The Israeli army also ventured into Palestinian cities and refugee camps, destroying

buildings and gathering men for interrogations. Israel also assassinated leaders it claims were involved in terrorism, with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine²⁵ and Hamas. The latest of these military attacks was in late July 2002 on a civilian building in Gaza city, killing 15 civilians including 9 children, where a Hamas leader Salah Shihadeh resided and was eventually killed.²⁶

On September 11th 2001, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict entered the new context of post-911 and the beginning of the international war on terrorism led by the United States. This war on terror was transposed by Israel to its conflict with the Palestinians particularly with the increase of the suicide attacks. Israel was given the green light to militarily crack down on 'terrorists' by the United States. This meant that the Palestinians were in an even weaker position to deal with Israel. Israel began using the war on terror as a new reason to reinstate occupation and maintain more control over the Palestinian territories.

There have been many developments particularly since March 28, 2002. Arafat was confined in his compound, *Al-Mukata'a*. The headquarters was attacked by the Israeli army and most of it destroyed. His security apparatus has been dismantled. The Israeli army systematically invaded every Palestinian city and town in the West Bank. The West Bank has been militarily reoccupied. There has been a dramatic increase of suicide attacks by individual Palestinians within Israel proper. The economy is in jeopardy, and the infrastructure of the PNA has been almost completely destroyed. Cities such as Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, and Qalqilya, to name a few, have been

²⁵ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was a party founded by George Habash. It emerged with other pan-Arab political movements for Palestinian activism against repressive Arab regimes (Farsoun & Zacharia, 1997:174).

²⁶ For further information on the daily conditions (such as the siege and curfews) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip see www.jewsagainsttheoccupation.org and www.nimn.org.

badly damaged. They are under sporadic curfew. Entry into and out of the Palestinian areas is difficult, with the new security posts (checkpoints) (Appendix I- Map 20). This resulted in a humanitarian crisis and loss of life in military attacks. The political, economic, social, and moral situation is troubled. Until this moment, there has been no international intervention to resume the peace talks (www.hdip.org).

During the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, the Israeli government caused destruction in all areas of Palestinian life. Further escalations have developed in recent months particularly since March 2002.

From September 29, 2000 - June 12, 2002, 1,588 Palestinians have been killed and more than 20,000 injured. In conjunction with its excessive use of force against civilians, the Israeli government has imposed various collective punishment measures that have served to choke the physical, economic, social and political life of Palestinians. These measures include invasions, curfews, strict internal and external closure and the destruction of houses, agricultural and industry (www.hdip.org - International Voluntary Work Camp in Palestine).²⁷

In addition, since February 2001 to the present day, 44 new Israeli settlements have been established in the West Bank (www.btselem.org). The number of trees uprooted between September 2000 and September 2001 amount to 394,642 (www.passia.org).²⁸

Arafat is being threatened with exile. His authority has been marginalized. The United States government, in agreement with Israel, has asked the Palestinians to change their political leadership, the Yasser Arafat leadership. They are called upon to hold a new election which will be held in January 2003. They are being asked to control the

²⁷ The Jenin Massacre in April 2002 is a recent example of the level of atrocities existing now in the West Bank and Gaza. For eighteen days reporters were not allowed entrance into Jenin refugee camp. Investigation is still not completed.

²⁸ In "The Jewish Week", New York edition, Israel's attorney general Elyakim Rubenstein "argues against a bill passed by the Knesset barring Israeli Arabs from buying homes in Jewish communities built on state land." This bill has not passed yet, but it is amongst other actions by Israel such as evicting Palestinian related to suicide bombers, in order to demonstrate its control over Palestinians.

individually based suicide attacks. This dissertation is written in light of the history of the Palestinian question, the present *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, and in the post-911 international upsurge of terrorism. The resolution to the conflict over Palestine, with all the issues discussed above, remains uncertain. The peace process is in an impasse.

2.3 Description of Different Categories of Palestinians and Relevant Legal Definitions

2.3.1 Definition of a Palestinian

The Palestinian National Charter (articles 5 and 6) defines Palestinians as those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine, regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there. Anyone born after that date of a Palestinian father - whether inside Palestine or outside it - is also a Palestinian. In addition, the Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinians (Davis, www.shaml.org).

2.3.2 Refugees and Other Categories

There are different categories of Palestinians. These include refugees from 1948 (*Lajeen Il Tamayeh Wi Arbi'een*), refugees from 1967 (*laj'e min il sab'aa wi siteen*), external refugees²⁹, internal refugees³⁰, displaced persons (*Nazi'heen*)³¹, insiders, outsiders, returnees, and the general category of the Palestinian diaspora, which includes outsiders and external refugees from 1948 and 1967 wars. A Palestinian may belong to one or more of these categories. For the purpose of this research, returnees, who are considered outsiders, can belong to other categories. Some are registered refugees, and

²⁹ Refugees residing in refugee camps mainly in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

³⁰ Refugees residing in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

³¹ Displaced refers to someone who was displaced from his original city, town, or village and is residing within Israel proper.

also insiders from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Some are 1948 refugees or 1967 refugees, whether registered or unregistered.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established late in 1949. Its main objective was to provide assistance and relief to those fleeing the war. According to Zureik, "Palestinian refugees are not seeking a place of residence other than their country of origin, and in accordance with UN Resolution 194 (III) (Zureik 1996:196-199). According to the UNRWA's working definition, a Palestine refugee:

...is a person whose normal residence was Palestine for a minimum of two years preceding the conflict in 1948, and who, as a result of this conflict, lost both his home and his means of livelihood and took refuge in 1948 in one of the countries where UNRWA provides relief. Refugees within this definition and the direct descendents of such refugees are eligible for Agency assistance if they are: registered with UNRWA; living in the area of UNRWA operations; and in need³² (UNRWA, 1994:6).

This was an operational definition for the purpose of determining who is entitled for assistance and was not intended to define a refugee. This definition does not include others affected by the 1948 or 1967 wars, such as Palestinians who did not reside within UNRWA's areas of operation, the internally displaced Palestinians³³, and Palestinians from the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip who were displaced in the 1967 war. Other categories include deportees from the West Bank and Gaza, and Palestinians who had left the occupied territories for different reasons like study, and whose residency permits had expired. The Israeli authorities did not allow them to return. The UNRWA definition also excluded Palestinians who were not in British Mandatory Palestine in

³² In 1993, the working definition of the Palestine refugee would exclude need and place of residence.

³³ The internally displaced Palestinians within Israel proper are those who remained in the land occupied in the 1948 war. They were displaced from their towns or villages to other areas within Israel. They were not included in UNRWA's services since they were presumed to be handled by Israel (Zureik 1996:9). By 1995, they were approximately 150,000 (ibid, 26).

1948, and those outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, who were not permitted to return. And finally there were the Palestinians who did not register with UNRWA either because of pride and/or who were financially well off. All the above categories were not registered as refugees in UNRWA records (Zureik 1996:9-10).

At the first session of the Refugee Working Group in Ottawa on May 13, 1992, the Palestinian delegation offered the following definition:

The Palestinian refugees are all those Palestinians (and their descendents) who were expelled or forced to leave their homes between November 1947 (Partition Plan) and January 1949 (Rhodes Armistice Agreements)³⁴, from territory controlled by Israel on that latter date. This...coincides with the Israeli definition of 'absentees', a category of Palestinians meant to be stripped of its most elementary human and civil rights (FactFile: Palestinian Refugees 2000:3).

Other relevant categories include the insiders who are Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Refugees living in the West Bank and Gaza are among the insiders category also. There are also Arab Israelis, also called Arabs of the Inside or *Arab il Dakhil*. These are Palestinians and their descendents who did not leave their residence; they have Israeli identification cards and are considered citizens of Israel. In addition, there are the outsiders who are also absentees, such as some of the PLO returnees, those who left in 1948. The Absentee Law of 1950 was issued to strip them of any right to return to their property, land, etc.

The Absentee Property Law, 1950, published under Section 9(d) of the Law and Administration Ordinance, 1948 states that the state of emergency declared by the Provisional Council of State on 19 May 1948 has ceased to exist, and defined 'absentee' as follows:

³⁴ The Rhodes Armistice Agreement in 1949 was signed between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, and Syria. It sets Israel's 1948 ceasefire borders (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:123, Documents of Palestine 1997(vol.1):373).

(1) A person who at any time during the period between 29 November 1947 and the day on which a declaration was a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held it, whether by himself or through another, and who at any time during the said period: (i) was a national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Iraq or the Yemen, or, (ii) was in one of these countries or in any part of Palestine outside the area of Israel, or, (iii) was a Palestinian citizen and left his ordinary place of residence in Palestine (a) for a place outside Palestine before 1 September 1948; or (b) for a place in Palestine held at the time by forces which sought to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment.

(2) A body of persons which, at any time during the period specified in Paragraph (1), was a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held such property, whether by itself or through another, and all the members, partners, shareholders, directors or managers of which are absentees within the meaning of Paragraph (1), or the management of the business of which is otherwise decisively controlled by such absentees, or all the capital of which is in the hands of such absentees (Davis, article www.shaml.org).

The Palestinian Diaspora, the outsiders, includes the ones that left in 1948 and 1967. They have settled mainly in the Arab world (particularly those individual who were members of the PLO) and in the Americas, Europe, and Africa.

2.3.3 Returnees '*Aideen*'

The returnees are the main category of interest in this dissertation. There is no direct reference or definition of a returnee in the Oslo agreement. However, in the Israeli Palestinian Interim Agreement in 1995 (Oslo II or Taba Agreement), under Annex II – Protocol Concerning Election, Appendix 1 (Article II) and in Annex III – Protocol Concerning Civil Affairs (Article 28- Population Registry and Documentation) there is a reference first to the procedures of electoral registry and second to the procedures for population registry, issuing of certificates and documents. Item no. 11 refers to the right of the Palestinians such as investors, direct family members of Palestinian residents, and other individual for humanitarian reasons, based on prior Israeli approval, to take up

permanent residency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Appendix III- Annex III of Interim Agreement, Article 28:1-17).

As the evidence suggests, there is no reference to the PLO returnees as a category in the Oslo Accord. Many of the procedures are left undocumented (Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip 1995: 159-162). Based on my research, there have been unofficial agreements that deal with which members of the PLO may return to Palestine, based on Israel's prior permission. All those who have returned were eligible to apply for the residency permit and be issued a National Number.

The term "returnee" has different meanings. The public definition of a returnee is anyone who returns to Palestine, for whatever reason, be it family reunion, visit, a decision to stay illegally after a visit, or to returned as part of the PLO cadres. There is a working definition of a returnee based on a PLO-Israeli understanding and agreement. In this research I have focused on the official definition and category of returnees as defined by the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs. A 'returnee' is anyone who has returned according to the Oslo agreement and was granted a national number - *Raqam Watani*. The PLO and PNA understand it as such and Israel accepts it, though there is no reference to it in any agreement. Israel does not consider the returnees any different from the residents of the West Bank and Gaza for they automatically get a PNA identity card cleared first by Israel. There are two main groups, PLO members (*Fateh*) and other political divisions in the PLO and their employees, representatives, cadres), and their families. Upon receiving a national number from the PNA, a returnee becomes a resident

and has the right to a Palestinian travel document.³⁵ This Palestinian laissez-passer is issued by the PNA if an individual has a national number. Still, some of the returnees did not apply for a Palestinian travel document, but instead use their Jordanian passport, or other passports, if they have one, because of the instability of the situation. Moreover, there are legal (registered at the Palestinian department of civil affairs) and illegal returnees (those who chose to violate the time of their permitted stay). The numbers of PLO and other returnees discussed in this thesis represent only the legal ones i.e. those registered with the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between a resident and a citizen. The only citizens are Israelis. Citizenship is not for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, because there is no Palestinian state.

To use the term 'returnee' is a challenge to the unsettled right of every Palestinian to return to his 'homeland'. The return of the PLO is taken as a return, but not a fully exercised return. It is a return with permission to the unsettled conflict area – occupied since 1967 – and so it is not part of the return that includes the international right of every Palestinian refugee to return to Palestine based on United Nations resolution 194. There is no agreement between the PLO and the Israelis on the 'right of return'. Oslo and its problems have challenged the place and legitimacy of refugee identity because it did not offer a resolution to the problem of the right of refugees to return. In addition, the recent situation in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem and the exile of the 22 Palestinians taking refuge there and the suggestion of exiling Arafat, challenges the definitiveness of the right to return of every PLO returnee and his family. It also challenges the residency

³⁵ The process of obtaining a national number is unusual. A person has to apply through PNA however the application is sent to Israel, is accepted or refused by Israel, and then the PNA grants the national number after Israeli acceptance.

rights of Palestinian insiders whom Israel finds threatening. Israel is demonstrating this by the recent discussions on expulsion of families of suicide bombers from the Palestinian territories.

In terms of the demography of return: some returnees were refugees from Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. Some returnees were originally from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but not all. Other returnees, as in the case of some of my informants, are from 1948 land (now Israel proper), from destroyed villages or Hebraized cities and towns like Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth, and the Galilee.

There are also different reasons that permitted return. The first and official return is the PLO return which resulted in the creation of the PNA (which includes insiders and PLO returnees, outsiders). Some returned as individuals or with their families. The second group was the returnees after the Gulf War especially from Kuwait. These are individuals who had immediate family in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and therefore have visitation rights. Thirdly, there are those who were residents and had left to complete their university studies abroad and returned. And finally, there were families, originally from the West Bank and Gaza, who lived abroad and returned after Oslo to make a life with their children in Palestine. The educational level of returnees is better on average than the remainder of the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The people who returned since Oslo have brought new blood, new ideas, and new mentalities. Within the different groups and kinds of return, there is a construction of different categories of returnees based on socio-economic and political class distinctions.

There are different types of returnees. According to a Palestinian official in the population registry in the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs in Ramallah, the only

official returnees are the PLO returnees. It is important to note that the exact number of PLO returnees is unknown. It is officially unavailable for the public. I have gathered that both the PNA and Israel know the numbers, since Palestinians apply through the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs, and Israel accepts or rejects these requests. However they do not disclose them for public use for political reasons, perhaps because the peace initiative is not finalized yet.

The Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs has provided all the different categories of returnees and their numbers. Prior to the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, the number of returnees changed on a daily basis.³⁶ Based on numbers obtained from the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs during fieldwork in March 2000, the number of 'PLO Returnees' and their family reunions, children above 22 years is between 100,000-200,000. This number includes both the civil and military PLO returnees. According to the PNA, this is the group referred to as the returnees.

Other groups of returning Palestinians are divided as follows. The first are individuals with a 'document to leave', issued by Israel. These documents are 3 years old that can be renewed. These amount to a 100,000 individuals according to a PNA official in the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs. The number of people with an Israeli laissez-passer, 1 year old that can be renewed, amounts to 20,000 according to a PNA official in the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs. People in this category have the right to obtain a national number issued by the PNA upon clearance by Israel. According to the Oslo agreement, those who left in 1/1/1987, which includes those who lost their 'document to

³⁶ Since the beginning of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, the number of returnees is unknown. What is known through reading the Arabic press is that many Palestinians who could leave did leave. There is no source to document how many left. However, what is significant is that the number of returnees since the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* has been limited.

leave' after January 1st 1987, have the right to be re-issued their lost identification cards.

The second group came to encourage investment. There are about 150-200 individuals holding West Bank identification and 200-250 with Gaza identification. The Israeli policy indicates that no more than approximately 100 IDs for investors are issued per year. The numbers for this category are not accurate because those investors have the right to bring their families with them but their total number does not exceed 1,000 individuals. The third group includes family reunions. There were 10,400 documented applications in the West Bank and Gaza. On March 1st 2000, there were 2,400 applications and 2,000 new submissions. Therefore from the 8,000 applications, 5,600 were given approval by the Israeli authorities to have identification issued, 400 were refused (i.e. 5%) and the remainder is still under security check. The fourth group includes holders of electoral identification numbering about 4,500 individuals. This applies to those 40 years of age or younger who have resided in the West Bank or Gaza Strip continually for 3 years with the exception of short periods of departure. It also applies to those 40 years of age and older, who have resided continually for 4 years with the exception of short periods of departure. There are 3,500 applications for whom the PNA and Israel have not agreed on the implementation procedures for giving them identification cards. They are still the subject of negotiation, though they have the right to return (Appendix III –Annex II of Interim Agreement, Article II, under Right to Vote: g).

2.4 Notions of the Palestinian State

The PLO, on November 15, 1998, declared the establishment of the Palestinian state in Algiers. The following is an excerpt from the declaration defining the Palestinian state from the PLO perspective:

The Palestine National Council, in the name of God, and in the name of the Palestinian Arab people; hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian territory with its capital Holy Jerusalem (Al-Quds Ash-Sharif). The state of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be. The state is for them to enjoy in it their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue in it a complete equality of rights. In it will be safeguarded their political and religious convictions and their human dignity by means of a parliamentary democratic system of governance, itself based on freedom of expression and the freedom to form parties...Governance will be based on principles of social justice, equality and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, colour or sex under the aegis of a constitution which ensures the rule of law and independent judiciary. Thus shall these principles allow no departure from Palestine's age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious co-existence.

The State of Palestine is an Arab state, an integral and indivisible part of the Arab nation, at one with that nation in heritage and civilization, with it also in its aspiration for liberation, progress, democracy and unity...The State of Palestine proclaims its commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...The State of Palestine herewith declares that it believes in the settlement of regional and international disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with the UN Charter and resolutions (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997:334).

Based on this declaration, the Palestinian state has the following features. It is established on Palestinian territory, with Jerusalem as its capital. It is the state of all Palestinians who share equal rights. It is a parliamentary democratic government. It is also an Arab state and hence a part of the Arab nation. And finally it provided for peace as the only way to settle conflict in the region, which is a change from its militaristic/revolutionary history.

The significance of this declaration was more symbolic than practical. It declared the independence of the State of Palestine from the perspective of the Palestinians, irrespective of international recognition. It was also a general declaration, without dealing with specificities of how it would come into existence. It did not specify where the Palestinian territory is and refers to Jerusalem as a whole and not Occupied East Jerusalem. It was a symbolic gesture, about the need to establish a Palestinian state from the point of view of the Palestinian leadership and people. It was a step on the way toward beginning the peaceful resolution to the conflict with Israel.

According to the Oslo agreement, the Palestinian state-to-be is in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The notion of the Palestinian state has certain political features. This will also be discussed in Chapter 5 where the features of the Palestinian state are presented with the data gathered. The PLO has proposed a one-state solution, with Palestine as a secular state, its citizens to include both Jews and Arabs. However, Israel, which is based on the idea of a majority Jewish state, did not accept this. In 1988, the PLO accepted the two-state solution dividing Palestine into an Israeli and Palestinian state. Though the PLO is not homogenous as individuals differ in their views, and not all Palestinians agree with the PLO, all the informants for this research accepted the two-state solution. This does not necessarily mean that they did not consider the 1948 land as Palestine. This is where the distinction surfaces between a Palestinian state-to-be and the homeland of Mandate Palestine. Accepting the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the territory of the Palestinian state does not forego the personal and cultural attachment to the original homeland in Palestine, to be further discussed in chapter four, the homeland chapter.

Other groups, such as HAMAS and Islamic Jihad, which were not part of my sample, do not accept the two-state solution or the one-state that includes the Jewish population, believing that all of historic Palestine belongs to the Palestinians. This is a rightwing minority group that does not represent the Palestinian population.

Within the paradigm of the two-state solution, there are certain features identified by informants about what would characterize this state. It must be sovereign. The Palestinian government needs to be in control of civil and security issues. It needs to have its own government structure and independent institutions, whether governmental or non-governmental. It requires well-defined borders. And finally, Palestinian citizens have the right to their own nationality and to move within national boundaries without the control of the Israeli government. These features and conditions must be present in the future Palestinian state but have yet to be agreed upon.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the historical context which led to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian homeland. The most relevant historical events and issues pertaining to the question of homeland and return were described beginning with the Ottoman rule, British mandate over Palestine, the creation of the state of Israel and the subsequent displacement and dispossession of Palestinians and the creation of the refugee issue, the Oslo peace processes, and the present *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. It described the different peace treaties beginning with Oslo and ending with the Sharm el-Sheikh Agreement in 1999. The significance of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* within the post-911 context sheds light on the most recent resistance movement within the Palestinian territories to the Israeli occupation, to the frustration with the role and practices of the PNA, and the

unrealized Oslo peace. In addition, since the thesis is focused on the category of the returnees, this chapter described all the different categories of Palestinians and the relevant legal definitions. Finally, a brief description of the different notions of a Palestinian state within the different Palestinian groups is presented. Within the framework of the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also proposed by Oslo, there are certain conditions and features for the Palestinian state that were described. This provides the context for the discrepancy found between the notion of a state and the reality in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which will be further discussed in the analysis of Chapter 5.

In light of what is presented in this chapter, the objective is to highlight the importance of the notion of a Palestinian homeland for Palestinians. It is also important to consider the significance of the issue of return within the Palestinian historical context, and in particular, the return of the PLO. The return of the PLO brought back the sole representative of the Palestinian people to work from within the homeland. As discussed above, there is no 'return' to Palestine up to this date. The only official return is the PLO return, until there is a settlement of the question of the return of Palestinian refugees. The question of a Palestinian homeland and the return to it is growing in importance as a research question.

The next chapter will deal with the most important theoretical notions and concepts related to the investigation of homeland in Palestine. The notion of homelands' space, place and landscape will be contextualized within notions of home and place identity. Issues of belonging and memory will also be addressed. And finally, the notion of the nation-state will be discussed, with its imagined aspects and its critique.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Concepts

This chapter provides an overview of the pertinent theoretical formulations relevant to the investigation of the notion of homeland in Palestine' and nation-state in the literature. I will first point out the numerous concepts that are relevant to understanding homeland. I will explain the choice of these theoretical concepts and present a concise summary of the different definitions and perspectives related to each concept as it is used and discussed in the literature. I will then establish and link the relevant concepts to the content of my case study.

This chapter will be divided into three main sections. The first will deal with notions connected to the notion of homeland. The notions of home and homeland have been investigated by Buttimer(1980) and Appadurai(1991). Three central concepts deal with the issues of home: space (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Farah 1999), place (Agnew and Duncan 1989, Lavin and Agatstein 1984) and landscape (Mitchell 1994, Azaryahu and Golan 2001). Connected to these concepts is the notion of memory (Anderson 1983, Laclau 1994, Said 1999b, Bowman 1994, 1999, Tamari 1999), which is vital to the construction of the notion of homeland. Regarding the scholarship on memory, the experience in the diaspora(s) is also discussed (Clifford 1994, Tololyan 1996). The experience in exile as refugees (Malkki 1995 & 1992), and the connection between the issue of exile and return (Abu-Lughod 1988, Al-Rasheed 1994, Farah 1999) are also important. Migration is an element in the formulation of homeland (King 1999, Clifford 1994, Anthias 1998) as well as the issue of crossing borders and boundaries (Shami 1996,

Malkki 1992). Ideas pertaining to territorial conceptions were also investigated by Yiftachel (1996) and Falah (1997).

The second section of this chapter will deal with the notion of the diaspora. I will present different scholarly work on diaspora, (Clifford 1994, Barkan and Shelton 1998). Return is central in the notion of a diaspora. Memory is another characteristic that shapes the identity of a diaspora as it is connected to the homeland. The existence of multiple memories within a national group is also found relevant (Bowman 1994).

The third notion that will be investigated is the nation, nation-state and its critique. Specific works on nations and nationalism will be used (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990, Kapferer 1988, Satyendra 1997). Related to that is some of the work on constructions of homelands and the 'imagined community' of the nation and myths around the nation as a unique diasporic community (Appadurai 1991, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Kearney 1995). Work on nation-states and nationalism touches on the emerging topic of transnationalism (Kearney 1995, Shami 1996) and globalization (Appadurai 1991, Kearney 1995).

3.1 Space, Place, and Landscape: Theoretical Formulations of Homeland

I have chosen to focus on the notions of space, place and landscape as the central entry points to understanding homeland. The intention of this research is to show that the questions of homeland are at their core about certain constructions of its space, place and landscape in individual and collective memory. Homeland is a place vitally connected to identity and memory construction. The identity of a place called homeland gathers meaning in different cultural and historical contexts. The issue of homeland in Palestine is therefore about a certain construction of its space, place, and landscape in individual

and collective memory, i.e. in the context of the cultural and historical transformations that took place in Palestine.

Space is transformed into place by the meanings attached to it. As Gieryn (2000) explains, space is “what place becomes when the unique gatherings of things, meanings, and values are sucked out” (465). Tuan (1977) emphasizes the aspect of experience as it transforms space into place. “In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place. ‘Space’ is more abstract than ‘place.’ What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (6). The investment of value is therefore a major factor in how space transforms to place.

Places are invested with meaning and value, “without naming, identification, or representation by ordinary people, a place is not place. Places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out. They are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined” (Gieryn 2000:465). Furthermore, Gieryn (2000) elaborates that there are three essential features of place: geographic location, material form, and is endowed with meaning and value

Place is a unique spot in the universe. Place is the distinction between here and there...Places have finitude, but they nest logically because the boundaries are (analytically and phenomenologically) elastic...Place has physicality...It is the compilation of things or objects at some particular spot in the universe. Places are worked by people: we make places and probably invest as much effort in making the supposedly pristine places of Nature as we do in cities or buildings...Without naming, identification, or representation by ordinary people, a place is not a place. Places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out (464-465).

Identity is affected by a place as other definitions of place indicate. Lavin and Agatstein (1984) use Stokols and Shumater's (1981) definition of place as referring to:

...A named and bounded physical space, with specific, concrete, local qualities, to which social and personal meanings have become attached through recurrent use. A place must necessarily have physical qualities but these are not sufficient; the creation of a place requires that an individual or group endow it with meaning. Place must, therefore, be regarded as cognitive and emotional constructions of individuals and groups (51-52).

Lengthy experiences in a particular place contribute to the sense of belongingness. Belongingness is a feeling that develops in a relationship to a place. One cannot belong to a place if there is no identification with it. Following Stokol's and Shumater's (1981) definition, place as cognitive and emotional constructions can explain this sense of belonging.

Places come to have their own unique identity. Cuba and Hummon (1993) integrate the concept of place identity into a more broad theory of identity and environment. Place identity provides an answer to the question 'who am I?' Place identities emerge "because places, as bounded locales imbued with personal, social and cultural meanings, provide a framework in which identity is constructed, maintained, and transformed"(112). They further explain how place is used to create attachment or a feeling of being at home. Identifying with a place takes the form of an emotional attachment to a place. It is also an association of common interest and values (113). Therefore, places have personal, social, and cultural meanings that are the context in which a particular identity develops and in which attachment is created. The significance of homeland in Palestine is partly to understand that it is about a place and its identity that is filled with meaning. Is this how a place transforms into a home or a homeland?

Identity is constructed through space and place as individuals and collectivities create their sites. In Palestine, Jewish, Christian and Muslim memory and identity is

established through the meaning and value of its place, which eventually is perceived as holy and historically significant. The sites of the historical events give it meaning and context. The religious value of Palestine as a place is part of its memory. The memory lies in the land and landscape as meaningful traces left behind by historic and religious events.

Regarding Palestinian memory and identity, Palestine was transformed from a space that is there, into a homeland (a place) with a particular national and historic meaning. Barbara Parmenter (1994) uses Relph's (1976) definition of place as "a segment of space which an individual or group imbues with special meaning, value and intention" (Parmenter 1994:4). How has the space of Palestine been transformed into a place to be called homeland? This has come about through living in Palestine and experience in working the land. It has developed out of personal memories of having a home, family and social life; it has developed out of the collective experience of war, exile, and the discontinuity of daily life, as it was known. This is where individual and collective experiences create memory and construct a homeland with significant meaning and value to those who were there.

Furthermore, a sense of place is described as both a social construct and an existential awareness. According to Parmenter, "to have a sense of place...is to self-consciously construct an attachment to and appreciation of the local environment...(it) requires a certain distance between the self and place, together with an acute awareness of the outside world and the flow of time" (Parmenter 1994:4) This explains that part of the attachment to Palestine, in particular in relation to the experience of exile.

Relevant to Palestine and its place, is the role of history and identity construction in the context of the loss of homeland, security, and homes, that took place across time. Within an understanding of place, “as a spot in the universe, with a gathering of physical stuff...(it) becomes a place only when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identity or memory...the meaning or value of the same place is labile – flexible in the hands of different people or cultures, malleable over time, and inevitably contested” (Gieryn 2000:465). This understanding of place applies to the question of the homeland in Palestine. In Palestine, history, idealism, danger, identity and memory have an added value particular to the Palestinian experience of their homeland. The homeland is challenged by the different forces at play and is therefore deconstructed and reconstructed across time.

As discussed by Parmenter earlier, there is an attachment that develops to a place. Space and place need to be interpreted as ‘images of complex – often ambivalent feelings’ (Tuan 1977:6). These feelings take the form of a certain attachment one has to a place. The value of a place creates a certain attachment to it. How does this attachment develop one might ask? Gieryn (2000) suggests that the:

Formation of emotional, sentimental bonds between people and a place brings together...the material formations on a geographic site and the meanings we invest in them. Place attachment comes from the accumulated biographical experiences: we associate places with the fulfilling, terrifying, traumatic, triumphant, secret events that happened to us personally there. The longer people live in a place, the more rooted they feel, and the greater their attachment to it (481).

The attachment one has to a place is seen in the case of the attachment to homeland (Tuan 1977:6). The personal experience of Palestinians in Palestine prior to their exile, the pain of loss and leaving, the simple events of daily life and conditions of exile have

all materialized into an emotional and sometimes romanticized attachment to Palestine as a place.

Landscape is another important concept to work with when dealing with the notion of homeland. According to Tuan (1977):

Landscape is personal and tribal history made visible. The native's identity – his place in the total scheme of things – is not in doubt because the myths that support it are as real as the rocks and waterholes he can see and touch. He finds recorded in his land the ancient story of lives and deeds of the immortal beings from whom he himself is descended, and whom he reveres (157).

Landscape corresponds to cultural interventions on nature. Homes, villages, towns, and cities come to represent the personal and social/cultural aspects of the landscape of homeland. Landscape also provides evidence of previous existence. Experience in working the land, as mentioned earlier, forms a connection to homeland's landscape.

In addition, landscape itself has a perspective too. As Mitchell (1999) describes, landscape has a voice too that is the result of those who were there and what they inscribed on it. This is a valuable insight about the landscape of Palestine that will explain it beyond the issue of land and claims on it. It is the landscape of the Holy Land that has known much destruction, war, and violence. And it is also not silent about that since these have created a particular violent construction of the landscape of Palestine.

...we are not talking (only) about land, about territorial disputes, real estate claims, land and house seizures and demolitions, and all the other depredations that have been visited on this land in the name of political, racial, or religious purity. It means that we are asked to step back from the interminable disputes over zones A and B and C, over portioning and sectioning and restrictions on travel, over the "3%" parcel of desert³⁷ that

³⁷ The 3% of arid land was referred to in the New York Times Story, September 8, 1998. A few Bedouins reside on it. It was to be given to the Palestinians, on the condition that they do not develop the land but leave it as it is, as a nature preserve.

may hold a key to the negotiations, over the archaeological digs that penetrate the land's surface to raise up the ghosts of its embattled past. It means that we are here to think about the land, this land, as a *passage*, an imaginary and symbolic as well as a real entity, a landscape, a visible, perceptible shape that is freighted with so many associations and conflicting representations that it is a wonder that the earth's crust does not buckle under their weight...that political thinking must not be conducted in an aesthetic vacuum, that politics must engage in complex dialectical negotiations with questions of form, affect, and sensibility, with cultural formations. We are called upon, in short, to think of Palestine as a work of landscape art in progress, to ask what vision of this land can be imagined, what geographical poetry can be recited over it, to heal, repair, unite, understand, and commemorate this place...We are enjoined, therefore, to think comparatively of landscapes, of what we see and hear and read not only when we take "landscape perspectives on Palestine," looking upon the nascent landscape of an as-yet-unborn nation (Palestine), but of what we see when we look out upon the world from the landscape perspective of Palestine. How does a country look to the world? How does the world look to a country? And how can the landscape itself be said to have a "perspective"? Does this not suggest, quite literally, that the landscape *sees* as well as being seen, that it looks back in some way at its beholders, returning their gaze with a blank, impassive stare, its face scarred with the traces of violence and destruction and (even more important) with the violent *constructions* that erupt on its surface? (237-238)

This description of the landscape perspective and the call to see that the landscape itself has a vision, suggests that the Holy Landscape of Palestine requires this vision that includes the observer but also the observed, both with unequal and misaligned perspectives. This goes further to the larger context and analysis of the homeland and landscape issue of Palestine as generated by the Palestinian claim. In addition, it helps assert that this is important for understanding the attachment to the homeland in Palestine.

Homeland has the landscape that people come to be attached to. Its landmarks "serve to enhance a people's identity; they encourage awareness of and loyalty to place" (Tuan 1977:158). Palestinian writers, poets and novelists have written about the

relationship Palestinians have with Palestine's nature and landscape (Jayussi 1992, Bowman 1994, Parmenter 1994). Landscape is connected to place and to the identification with it through memory.³⁸ Parmenter (1994) has examined place in Palestinian writing:

Palestinian writers have established a symbolic landscape of meaning and value as a way of defining their place in the world. The house, courtyard, village, trees and other features prominent in the Palestine of memories figure just as prominently in the contemporary geography of Palestinian literature. In and among these features stands the writer, seeking, like the Zionist of an earlier period, boundaries and security. And yet it seems that neither can find the rootedness they seek. 'Your need to demonstrate the history of stones,' Darwish tells Israelis, 'does not give you prior membership over him who knows the time of the rain from the smell of the stone.' Palestinian writers attempt to maintain this essential meaning of stones as a means of confronting and resisting Israeli versions of place, history, and identity (97-98).

Palestinian memory of the landscape, which includes the different personal and cultural experiences of it, becomes part of the memory of the landscape. 'Him who knows the time of the rain from the smell of the stone' (Parmenter 1994:98) is a statement about the native who knows the language of the landscape from the most ordinary experiences of the senses.

One consequence of this construction of landscape is how Palestinian memory produces a different experience of place from Israel's and produces a different map of Palestine. Uri Avneri, an Israeli journalist, when speaking with Palestinians, hears described a map of the land different from his map:

In every meeting a map is drawn - not the map of today, but the map from the Mandate period- when Shlomi was Basa, and Kiryat Shemona was Khalsa, and Ashdod was Asdud...After three generations, nothing has

³⁸ For a complete source investigating the different theoretical constructs about landscape and Palestine, see Abu-Lughod, Roger Heacock and Khaled Nashef (eds.) *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal poetry*, 1999. See also Bardenstein (1999) for an investigation on the connection between trees, land and collective memory.

been erased; on the contrary, it has been sharpened...It will never be easy to solve the problem of a man who dreams about his house and the trees of [his village], even if he has never seen them (Parmenter 5-6).

The meaning in Avneri's description depicts the existence of a particular geography of Palestine. This geography draws a map of a place that does not exist anymore. Individual and collective memory produces a different place and a different geographic map of it. Even though it conflicts with the political solution, it remains a map that is reconstructed and maintained in the Palestinian narrative, endowed with meaning, feeling and the imagination. The political landscape is in conflict with the cultural and personal landscape that is unresolved in a political peace agreement.

To understand why Palestinians still preserve their original map of Palestine, one needs to look at Israeli transformation of the Palestinian landscape. Palestine was occupied by Israel. This occupation meant that the map had to be changed. Azaryahu and Golan (2001) discussed in detail the creation of the Hebrew map of Israel after the establishment of the state of Israel. Hebrew-ization of the map began in the 1950s. Its objective was to transform the landscape by re-naming it, giving it Hebrew names in place of the Arabic names. This process is a good example of how occupation had changed what was there before, and created a new landscape that asserts the Jewish identity of the new state. The significance of such actions on the Palestinians is symbolic. It is defied, as shown above, by maintaining the map of the Mandate Palestine. It is also an Israeli act to indicate that this place is no longer the Palestinian homeland. The names of cities, towns, villages, and roads become through the process no longer recognizable by the Palestinian.

Eventually, two landscapes exist in Palestine. The Palestinian one is absent, changed, and taken over. The Israeli is present and dominant. Said (1999b) remarks, the “problem with the Jewish one (memory) is that it eliminates from the landscape the former Palestinian presence”(19). The two landscapes are in conflict. Mitchell (1994) describes the ‘Holy Land’ as the ‘contested territories of Israel and Palestine’ where it is:

...Hard to imagine two landscapes more remote from one another, both in geographic location and in cultural/political significance...The Holy Land has been at the center of imperial struggle throughout its long history; landscape is a palimpsest of scar tissue, a paradise that has been ‘despoiled’ by conquering empires more often than any other region on earth (20).

The landscape of the Holy Land is disfigured by war, expulsion, and displacement, leaving a landscape that has many traces of violence (27). For Palestinians the manipulation of their landscape is part of the reality of occupation.

When a place is occupied and its landscape changed, its borders and boundaries also undergo change. The control of territory becomes a measure of surveillance by Israel to enforce its policies as to who enters, as well as the number of those given permission to enter the Palestinian territories (Zureik 2001). “Borders reflect the development of geographically bounded administrative units that are closely regulated. Borders demarcate the jurisdiction between states.” (14) They become a part of the construction of a conflictual identity, such as the Palestinians’, where it is used to reinforce political positions and attitudes toward the ‘other’. As Rashid Khalidi (1997) asserts, the issue of borders, airports, and checkpoints are determining areas of a collective identity felt by Palestinians.

The quintessential Palestinian experience, which illustrates some of the most basic issues raised by Palestinian identity, takes place at a border, an

airport, a checkpoint: in short, at any one of those many modern barriers where identities are checked and verified. What happens to Palestinians at these crossing points brings home to them how much they share in common as a people. For it is at these borders and barriers that the six million Palestinians are singled out for 'special treatment,' and are forcefully reminded of their identity: of who they are, and of why they are different from others...for Palestinians, arrival at such barriers generates shared sources of profound anxiety. This is true whether this is a formal frontier between states, or a military checkpoint like those erected by Israel a few years ago between Arab East Jerusalem and its suburbs and immediate hinterland in the West Bank, or those currently maintained by Israeli and Palestinian security forces through the West Bank and Gaza Strip...Borders are a problem for Palestinians since their identity – which is constantly reinforced in myriad positive and negative ways – not only is subject to question by the powers that be; but also is in many contexts suspect almost by definition...every Palestinian is exposed to the possibility of harassment, exclusion, and sometimes worst, simply because of his or her identity (Khalidi 1997:1-2).

It is not only the experience of borders and boundaries, it is what they come to represent within Palestinian identity. They are symbolic and experiential reminders of an identity that is the source of conflict.

Identity, however, may not be uniform, particularly diasporic identities. Malkki (1992) describes identity as a troubled conceptual vehicle. It appears as a 'root essence', 'a pure product.' But it is not so. "Identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorization by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera" (37). This point is important for the research question. It shows that identity is formed in different contexts and experiences and is not one-dimensional. Palestinian diasporic identity is multiple and mobile against a world dominated by nation-states and fixed borders. It can still have common features such as the experience of Palestinians at borders and boundaries. In sum, Palestinian identity involves self-construction, a construction by others, a form of 'othering', and

also a collective memory of a group that is put to practice in the different sites of conflict for Palestinians.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that there is a web that connects Palestinian identity, whether individual and/or collective, to a place called homeland. Homeland remains one of the most powerful units and symbols of mobile and displaced groups; however, the relation to homeland is constructed differently in different settings (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). The Palestinian identity is also connected to the memory in homeland.

3.2 The Diaspora and the Palestinians

The diaspora is an important aspect in the investigation of homeland. The diaspora has a particular relationship with homeland as exemplified in the different historic cases of Jews, Armenians, Chileans, and Palestinians. The diaspora is a result of leaving homeland, in other words, exile. As a group leaves their homeland and lives in exile for extended periods of time, its members establish a relationship and construct the homeland in exile.

Diaspora, as a particular collectivity, is a term that has been defined by different authors. It is also an ancient term that has witnessed a significant transformation in the recent years. James Clifford (1994) argued that diasporas are “a history of dispersal, myth/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host country (bad host), desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship” (305). The diaspora is the opposite of the internal consistency and assimilation of a national culture since it has no nation-state (Barkan and Shelton, 1988:5). Within Clifford’s definition of the diaspora as a traveling term, is the

importance of the issue of return. Tololyan (1996) also demonstrates that the idea of return, not only the physical return, is a major characteristic of diaspora.

Palestinian diaspora is partial and incomplete. Half of the Palestinian population remained in the West Bank, Gaza, and Israel proper. Therefore, only half of the Palestinian total population has the experience of living in a diaspora. Some argue that even those in their own land, such as the displaced or those made refugees but still living in occupied territories, have the experience of being exiled (Abu-Lughod 1988).

The assumed homogenized diasporic community is criticized by Anthias (1998). He addresses the failure to include gender, class and generation, as well as inter-group and intra-group divisions in the diaspora. He further argues that diaspora needs to be “formulated within a paradigm of ‘social divisions and identities’ that is able to treat collective solidaristic bonds as emergent and multiple, and to acknowledge the political dynamics of these processes” (577-578). Anthias makes a valid point about diaspora emerging within social divisions and different identities resulting out of that. This is significant to understand the Palestinian diaspora that has also resulted in divisions across gender and class. The focus on the PLO returnees in this dissertation only corresponds to a partial discussion of the exiled community. The experience of a political group produces a different social class and identity.

Though as mentioned earlier, diaspora involves multiplicity within social and political processes, one main feature that characterizes the Palestinian situation as a diaspora is their dream of return (Bowman 1999, Farah 1999, Abu-Lughod 1988). As demonstrated by Al-Rasheed (1994), not all refugees have the myth or dream of return as he shows in his research on Iraqi Arabs and Assyrian refugees in London. He considers

that the myth of return mainly depends on the political and family connections particular refugees have with their homeland. However, this does not apply to the Palestinian experience, since the issue of return is central to Palestinian identity (Khalidi 1997, Farsoun and Zacharia 1997, Said 1995,1992). Palestinian refugees are connected to their homeland and dream of the moment of return. Their identity is based on the sense of belonging to the homeland (Baramki and Abdul Rahman 1999). However, the Palestinian experience in exile produced different groups with different views on their future.

Exile has defined the Palestinian experience and the refugee camps have become the symbol of the Palestinian experience. However, the Palestinian exile experience is not limited to the refugee camps and the diverse experiences of exile have resulted in many Palestinian communities with discordant views about the future of Palestine (Letourneau 2002:1).

Randa Farah (1999) took up the issue of return to Palestine from the refugee perspective in her study of Al-Baq'a refugee camp in Jordan. She argues that whether it is a myth or is imagined, return is 'real' in the lives of Palestinian refugees she met. However, this does not mean that return itself is not under reconstruction. She asserts that Palestinian refugees are reproducing their subjective identities in the present, which shows that the central reference to express belonging to the 'nation' has been dismantled and new multiple references are emerging. Refugees are re-imagining the right and dream of return, giving it a new life amidst political processes, which threaten to dismantle the dream of return. Zureik (1997) explains this by pointing out that the "process of return itself is governed by external political, social and administrative constraints in which the refuge has little say in determining." (86) The fact of

contingency of return on other factors is important in understanding the complex issue of return.

Memory is another major characteristic of the diaspora as provided in Clifford's definition. As pointed out by Anthias (1998) in treating 'collective solidaristic bonds as emergent and multiple', this applies to memory. Memory is fragmented, contradictory, and changes over time. Recollection of memory is fluid and differs according to the person's background. Memory is also individual, collective, and multiple. Bowman (1994) points to the multiplicity within an assumed collective and unified memory. He argues that there are multiple memories within a national group, which are unified in some ways, but also differ in their particular experiences and recollections. This reflects on how they view their homeland. Taking the case of three different Palestinian writers, Bowman (1994) demonstrates that Palestinians do not have the same memory. It differs according to age, class, and experience, whether in exile or in Palestine.

Memory is constructed in a particular social and political context. While investigating the memory of the Arab Revolt of 1936, Swedenburg (1991) argues that memory is constructed, and does not reproduce the 'truth' that took place. He argues that Palestinian memory cannot be understood alone. It needs to be put in the context of the hegemony of Zionism and Western support of Israel. The construction of Palestinian national memory is connected to the construction of identity.

Palestinian identity formed mainly in response to the experience of collective trauma and conflict with occupation. Khalidi (1996) discusses how Palestinian identity was formed, changed, and overlapped with other identities as Palestinians "identified with the Ottoman Empire, their religion, Arabism, their homeland Palestine, their city or

region, and their family, without feeling any contradiction or sense of conflicting loyalties" (Khalidi 1996:201). These loyalties are all a part of the construction of Palestinian identity. However, after the catastrophe of 1948,

Palestinians held fast to this strong sense of identity...both those who became refugees and those who remained in their homes inside Palestine. Even while it continued to evolve and change, it remained the foundation upon which the Palestinian nationalist groups that emerged after 1948 were to build (Khalidi 1996:213).

The national past also serves as a primary producer of identity (Litvak 1994). Litvak argues that the creation of a Palestinian national identity involved constructing a Palestinian national past that is based on reality and imagination for the national objective of developing a Palestinian collective consciousness. The support that Israel has from the West and the way the Palestinians are perceived in the West, are a factor in how memory is constructed. It therefore feeds into the relationship one has with homeland, how it is imagined, and what kind of memory is evoked to maintain the ideal and the collective connection to it.

Palestinian collective memory particularly after the creation of Israel and the dispossession of Palestinians in 1948 and 1967 helped in developing a modern national collectivity. It has contributed to the construction of a collective Palestinian identity and 'imagined community'. Khalidi (1996) argues that

...The assertion that Palestinian nationalism developed in response to the challenge of Zionism embodies a kernel of a much older truth: this modern nationalism was rooted in long-standing attitudes of concern for Palestine as a sacred entity in response to perceived external threats. The incursions of the European powers and the Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century were only the most recent examples of this threat (217).

Khalidi's analysis places the Palestinian identity within the context of its modern formation. However, the age-old ideas pertaining to Palestine as a holy place threatened

by foreign forces provided for Palestinian local patriotism that emerged long before present Palestinian national identity (ibid 218). This is important for the investigation of this thesis, as it deals with the identity of Palestine as a holy land and the construction of a particular notion of homeland in Palestine. This identity of Palestine as a homeland has also constructed multiple narratives that are connected to the construction of Palestinian identity.

The three notions discussed above – diaspora, return, and memory construction – have been chosen for the discussion. They are all related to the Palestinian case. Part of the Palestinian experience is the diaspora, hence this paper uses a focus group from the diaspora. Return is an important part of the diaspora experience for Palestinians. It is discussed thoroughly in this research, using the PLO returnees. Finally, memory is a notion to be understood within the context of the Palestinian national past and national objective of achieving an independent state. It has produced multiple narratives within the Palestinian national collectivity. It is constructed in different social and political contexts. In the Palestinian case, it is also a tool to maintain a sense of the collective identity of a national group.

3.3 The ‘Nation-State’ and Beyond...

3.3.1 Defining the Nation and the Nation-State

In the nineteenth century, the nation-state was created as a structure of political organization. However, at that time, most of the world was not divided into nation-states. In the second half of the twentieth century, the model of the nation-state became a standard political structure. As the world is moving into a context of larger organizations, with some critique of this situation, the Palestinians still have not

established their own nation-state. In order to contextualize the Palestinian quest for a state, an investigation of the notion of the nation, the nation-state and nationalism is necessary. This also is relevant for the investigation of the notion of homeland.

The views of different authors on nation, nationalism, and nation-state are presented. (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawn 1990, Satyendra 1997, Hutchinson & Smith 1994, Guibernau 1996, Conner 1994, Giddens 1994, Renan 1994, Weber 1994, Alter 1985)³⁹. Because of the ambiguous nature of the nation, there has been a problem in the study of nations and nationalism. There exists no agreed upon definitions in the literature. Therefore, multiple definitions of the nation and nationalism have emerged.

Anderson's (1983) 'Imagined Communities' is a pivotal anthropological reference in this investigation. He argues that the nation, using the idea of the cultural roots of nationalism, is an 'imagined political community':

Nationality, or one might prefer to put it in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind (13)...In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the member of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...(15) The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind...It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm...Nations dream of being free...The gauge and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state...Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two

³⁹ For further discussions on the notions of nations, nationalism, and nation-state see Balakrishnan (1996), Birch (1989), and Cederman (1997).

centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings (16).

The idea of an imagined community can also include a conglomerate of nations, and a religious notion of the nation. The term, the 'Arab world' or 'Arab nation' is a reference to Arab nations that have a common language, namely the classical Arabic language. All the Arab nation-states, which have a common memory, history, and language, are included in this conception of the nation. In addition, Islam is the principal religion of the region. The Arab world is also called the Arab Islamic Nation. This notion is important since the Palestinians see themselves as part of the larger Arab Islamic Nation. This connects with the idea of an Arab homeland, *Al Watan Al Arabi*, which is the bigger homeland of the different Arab states. These different and yet coinciding identities portray different 'imagined communities'. Gupta & Ferguson (1992) elaborate on that:

...One could point to a few genuinely transnational identities like that forged on the lines of the Islamic community. Hence, any effort to understand how identity and location become tied through nationalism must examine those situations where the imagined community does not map out a national terrain. The displacement of identity and culture from "the nation" not only forces us to reevaluate our ideas about culture and identity but also enables us to denaturalize the nation as the hegemonic form of organizing space. To place nationalism within a transnational context therefore enables one to pose new questions about spatial identities and commitments (74).

Diaspora are an 'ideal' example of communities that imagine themselves as a nation, retain the myth of their uniqueness and have a vision of homeland accompanied by the dream of return (Kearney 1995). Homeland itself is partly invented, existing in the imagination of the deterritorialized or exile groups (Appadurai 1991). This follows Anderson's idea of the imagined community of the nation, which therefore extends into the imagined homeland. If the nation is imagined, then any product of the nations'

imagination can also be seen as a construction. However, it cannot be denied that Anderson's conceptualization of the nation, which in this case can be extended to homeland, is a reality in the world. Nations and homeland still exist in the minds of different peoples.

Turning back to the literature, it is agreed that there is a difference between the concept of the nation, and other forms of collective identity such as class, region, gender, race, and religious community. However, there is a dispute about "the role of ethnic, as opposed to political, components of the nation; about the balance between 'subjective' elements like will and memory, and more 'objective' elements like territory and language; and about the nature and role of ethnicity in national identity" (Hutchinson & Smith 1994:4).

It is also difficult to define nationalism. More of a consensus is reached defining nationalism, considering its ideology and movement which both involve political and cultural elements (Hutchinson & Smith 1994:4). According to Guibernau (1996), nationalism is "the sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life, and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny" (47). It is different from the nation and the nation-state. The nation-state is "a modern phenomenon, characterized by the formation of a kind of state which has the monopoly of what it claims to be the legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the people subjected to its rule by means of homogenizations, creating a common cultural, symbols, values, reviving traditions and myths of origin, and sometimes inventing them" (47).

According to Conner, “defining and conceptualizing the nation is much more difficult because the essence of a nation is intangible. This essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its member, from all other people in a most vital way.” However, as some speak of a nation as a ‘sense of homogeneity’, oneness, belonging, or common consciousness, he sees that the psychological dimension provides nations with a sense like that of the extended family (38). Guibernau (1996) offers a similar definition. The nation is “a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project of the future and claiming the right to rule itself. Thus, the ‘nation’ involves five dimensions: psychological, (consciousness of forming a group), cultural, territorial, political, and historical” (47).

On the contrary, some authors argue that the nation only exists when there is a state. According to Giddens (1994), the ‘nation’...only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed...The nation-state, which exists in a complex of other nation-states, is a set of institutional forms of governance maintaining an administrative monopoly over a territory with demarcated boundaries (borders), its rule being sanctioned by law and direct control of the means of internal and external violence” (34-35).

Ernest Renan (1994) focuses on the collective memory of work, sacrifice and dedication. “The nation...is the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice, and devotion. The worship of ancestors is understandably justifiable, since our ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, of great men, of glory...that is the social

principle on which national ideas rests (17). This definition can apply to the Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic nation.

Max Weber (1994) focuses on the 'sentiment of solidarity' against other groups, therefore, a matter of values. "A nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own" (25). However, not all nations create their own states, like the Kurdish and Palestinian example.

Alter (1985) differentiates between cultural nations and political nations. "The political nation centers on the idea of individual and collective self-determination and derives from the individual's free will and subjective commitment to the nation...By contrast, the spirit of community that obtains in a cultural nation is founded upon seemingly objective criteria such as common heritage and language, a distant area of settlement, religion, customs, and history, and does not need to be mediated by a national state or other political form" (14). This point is valid for this research. It provides that the nation can be seen with its cultural and political form, as will be demonstrated in the homeland chapter of this thesis.

Gellner (1983) asserts that nations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity. The state emerged without the help of the nation and some nations emerged without their own state as in the case of the Palestinians. Hobsbawm (1990) dealt with the changes and transformations in the concept of the nation. He does not regard the 'nation' as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity. It belongs exclusively to a particular and historically recent period. It is a social entity to the extent that it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state'. Satyendra

(1997) investigates the origins of nations, tracing the idea of primordial roots of a nation to kinship. A nation grows by a process of differentiation and opposition, as in the development of the Palestinian nation when Israel came into existence.

In conclusion, as demonstrated above, there is difficulty in the study of nation and nationalism because there is no sufficient and established definition to work with in the literature. I will use an operational definition that helps define the Palestinian Arab nation, based on Anderson's (1983) terminology. The Palestinian Arab nation is an imagined community of six million members that do not all know each other; limited because it differentiates itself from other nations (even within the same region), and sovereign (this part is not yet fulfilled without the Palestinian state); and above all, many Palestinians are willing to die for their imagined community and in that sense also for the imagined homeland.

In addition, there are other aspects of the Palestinian nation to be included. Though some argue that the nation does not exist without a state, for the Palestinians it is the contrary. The nation exists regardless of the state. They are joined by the 'sentiment of belonging' (Guibernau 1996) and solidarity (Weber 1994). There is the psychological bond (Conner 1994) that formed as a result of the common culture, attachment to territory (in this case the Palestinian homeland), a common history, and a shared project in the future of the Palestinian state (Guibernau 1996). In addition, I would add to that definition the collective memory of loss, work, sacrifice, and commitment to the Palestinian cause (Renan 1994).

Finally, the concept of the Palestinian nation and nationalism also undergoes change and hence, is an adaptive 'social entity'. It is a product of a specific historic

context of foreign rule, whether Ottoman, British, or Israeli. Moreover, it relates to a certain vision of a nation-state, established on territory, in a world made of nation-states (Hobsbawm 1990).

3.3.2 Critique of the Nation-State

An overview of the literature shows that there is a growing interest and movement in anthropology towards the study of globalization (Kearney 1995) and transnationalism (Appadurai 1991, Shami 1996). The discourse on globalization includes a criticism of the nation-state. With the end of the Western empires and the Soviet Union, there has been an increase in state membership in the United Nations from 54 in 1954 to 185 in 1999. According to Spybey, "in the current period of late modernity the whole world is divided up territorially and politically into nation-state" (1996:179).

The Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1917, for example, between France and Britain, divided up the Middle East, based on their interests, into nation-states. This division was artificial without the least consideration to the original boundaries. With the artificial divisions of the nation-state, the agreement helped create the particular modern nationalisms of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Trans-Jordan, and Iraq. The case in Palestine is quite different since it was divided in 1947 into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

The concept of the nation-state has been externally imposed on the Middle East, as it was in other colonized places. In the Middle East, the nation-state model was integrated within the exiting socio-political structure and relations in the region. It would be a part of other, larger forms of loyalties to the Arab nation and the Muslim nation.

Some authors, such as Birch (1989), argue that the nation-state has been more beneficial than problematic. First, the nation-states were now governing their own

people, instead of being controlled by colonial or foreign regimes. Secondly, it has brought a sense of collective identity, privilege and pride where all citizens are equal. Thirdly, it gave governments the political authority to develop their own states (221).

According to the literature on globalization, the nation is deteriorating, with the challenge of different forms of globalization. Some analysts suggest the 'demise' of the nation-state (Castells 1997, Lash and Urry 1994). Castell argues that 'globalization, in its different dimensions, undermines the autonomy and decision-making power of the nation-state' (1997:ii, 261). Others maintain that it is 'withering away' (Bauman 1998, Von Wright 1997). Koopman and Statham, hold a similar position regarding the power of globalization being an external threat to the 'nation-state's position as the predominant unit of social organization' (1999:1). They furthermore argue that there are forces within the nation-state that challenge its 'legitimacy, authority and integrative capacities' (1999:1). Birch (1998) has said that,

Some scholars take the view that it is likely to be short-lived, maintaining that the growing interdependence of states is making the state system obsolete. Regional associations are developing and the growth of transnational relations will inevitably, it is said, lead to the replacement of the state system by some new kind of global political organization (223).

The argument made about the role of globalization is due to the developments in communications technologies that cut across space, bringing places closer than they ever were (Dicken, 1998, Robertson 1992). In addition, there is 'the development of relationships that cut across national borders or extend beyond the nation-state' (Fulcher 2000:524).

However, this argument is not supported by evidence. According to Fulcher (2000), globalization has not led to the decline of the nation-state. On the contrary, throughout the history of globalization, it:

...[W]as in fact associated with the rise of the nation-state through the construction of overseas empires that extended and strengthened it. The development of global political organization has reinforced the nation-state through the growth of international organizations based on the principle of national sovereignty. It is transnational flow, networks, and organizations that have challenged the authority of the nation-state. These do not, however, float in a global limbo but are always rooted in and dependent upon some nation-state or other (522).

Those transnational organizations depend on the support and co-operation of the nation-states. Organizations, such as the UN and its affiliates, have no executive authority over the nation-state (Birch 1998:223).

To conclude, the literature on globalization argues that new and larger units of power are replacing the nation state. However, this being true, it does not imply that lower levels of organization are dismantled. The notion and reality of the nation-state still maintains its power and existence, though it has changed. Fulcher (2000) explains that,

...The nation-state changes, as does the context within which it operates, but there is no sign of its 'demise' or 'withering away' as some global society emerges. Those who argue that it is in decline confuse the nation-state, a general political structure, with its particular historical manifestations. They fail to recognize that its strength lies in its flexibility and adaptability, which mean that it can take many forms, coexist with diverse ideologies, religious and political, and slot itself into regional and global structures...We live in a society that has a global level of organization but also regional, national, and sub-national levels of organization too (541).

In the context of the Middle East, there are not only local nationalisms but regional and religious ones - the Arab Nation and the Islamic Nation. Therefore, three forms of

collectivities - identifying with local nationalism, Arab nationalism, and being a part of the global Muslim Nation - co-exist simultaneously. This extends to Palestine as well. The Palestinian sense of belonging is multi-leveled – communal, national, and regional. As in the examples of other states of the Fertile Crescent, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon enjoy multiple loyalties that co-exist with the nation-state. This does not mean that they co-exist without any conflict or overlapping of identities. However, there are smaller circles of allegiance within larger ones.

The political events of the 20th century have made the Palestinians into a nation without a state. The dream of the Palestinian nation is to manifest itself on the land of Palestine in the form of a state (Bisharat 1992, Baramki and Abdul Rahman 1999). In the present, having a state is critical to ensure the preservation of Palestinian identity. Baramki and Abdul Rahman (1999) argue that only when Palestinians have their own state, will they be able to define themselves as Palestinian-Arab. Being Palestinian and Arab are connected here with having a state. However, having a state or not, does not diminish the identification with being Palestinians and Arab.

Palestinians in exile are joined together as a national group because of the experience of shared struggle and loss of their historic homeland. In addition, Palestinian refugees, whether in host countries or in the West Bank and Gaza, “demonstrate the powerful influence of the so-called ‘imagined community’ on sustaining Palestinian identity and attachment to the homeland” (Zureik 2002:82). The imagined community of Palestinians is driven by the need to establish its own state. Its identity and sense of belonging to its homeland hold the dream of the state and of return to homeland in the collective conscience.

Palestinians also want territorial control over the allocated piece of their homeland. They want sovereignty and the privileges of being citizens of their own state.

Palestinians are behind in their historical and political development. This is also linked to the establishment of the state of Israel. Israel created a state for the Jews to be their national home. The Palestinian have a similar demand. To have a state is viewed as critical, particularly since Israel, the occupier of their land, has an internationally recognized state. This discussion illustrates the significance of the creation of the nation-state, considering all the different views regarding it, for the Palestinian national community.

3.4 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to present three different, yet intersecting, theoretical concepts that will bring an understanding to the research question concerning the notion of homeland. I have demonstrated that the construction of place and therefore homeland, takes place in personal, social and cultural, and political contexts which give it meaning. This happens as space begins to gather meaning and value resulting from experience in a place. In addition, landscape of a place gathers personal and cultural meanings, resulting in a particular geography of a place. The case of Palestine is complicated by the occupation of its place. Occupation has resulted in creating a physically and emotionally changed place and landscape.

The experience in the diaspora, which involves a history of displacement, memories of the homeland, a collective identity, and the desire to return, are also discussed. Diasporas, too, are constructions in particular social and historical contexts. The memories of diaspora are not homogenous. They can be fragmented and susceptible

to change over time. The Palestinian diaspora, as demonstrated, has the main characteristics given in the various definitions. However, they are partial and incomplete. The dream of return and the shared memory of dispersal emerge as the strongest elements.

The last theoretical segment involved defining the nation with its ambiguity, nationalism and the nation-state. This shows the different ways the nation is viewed in the literature. Anderson's definition of the nation as an 'imagined community' is found to be highly valuable for this investigation. A critique of the nation-state is also presented in light of the work on globalization. Regardless of some of the arguments about the nation being 'in demise' or 'withering', it still remains a viable political unit of organization, recognized around the world. It is, however, emerging and adapting into larger contexts of operation – local, regional and global.

In the next chapter, I will use the theoretical concepts discussed in this chapter as the basis for analyzing the information gathered. In addition, the data and fieldwork observations guided which notions will be used for the analysis. The notions of place and landscape are important to explain the notion of homeland in Palestine. In addition, the notion of the diaspora and how it pertains to the particular Palestinian experience will be used to demonstrate the sense of belonging and connectivity to a homeland. The notion of the nation-state will be useful to demonstrate how it differs from the notion of homeland. It is more relevant however in Chapter 5 where the experience of return is presented. The notion of the nation-state and the need for the creation of the Palestinian state will be juxtaposed against the reality in the West Bank and Gaza.

Chapter Four

Constructing the Homeland of Palestine

In this chapter I will be investigating the notion of 'homeland' as understood by PLO returnees in Ramallah and Gaza, the two Palestinian cities where most of the returnees reside. The analysis of the data is based on the twenty-four interviews conducted with PLO returnees to Palestine between 1994 and 1996.

These in-depth interviews dealt extensively with three main topics: experience of exile; the 'construction' of the homeland from afar; and the reality of the return to Palestine. As we have seen in Chapters 1 and 3, these three aspects are central to the analysis of homeland: the experience of exile increases the longing for belonging and thus shapes in part the intellectual and emotional construction of the homeland. The return to Palestine is crucial because it creates the confrontation of the 'constructed' homeland with the stark reality.

I will start with a lexical analysis of the word homeland in Arabic, illustrating its semantic complexity and its different facets. I will then investigate the various dimensions of the semantic field and meaning of homeland as revealed by the interview data.

From working in the field and meeting returnees, I came to a range of terms and expressions related to the homeland as Palestine that will be presented in the section on 'homeland articulated'. I categorized them within the personal, social and cultural, and political homeland criteria. The objective of this analysis is to present what was articulated in terms of expressions.

As I was analyzing the data, I looked at the different areas mentioned above. I observed a recurrence of three main aspects that I then categorized into the three main themes of homeland. In the discussion about the personal notion of homeland, the responses indicated that it was about an ideal, a value, a connection to one's self, a house, a sense of belonging and personal memories expressed in longing. These I translated as the personal dimension of homeland, or the personal homeland. I will explore the personal homeland in detail in this chapter, as was expressed by respondents.

The narratives in the interviews also expressed a social and cultural dimension to homeland. Respondents talked about the significance of its history as a holy land. Its recent history of occupation was stressed. It had created victims, like the Palestinian exiles. In addition, there is the collective memory of being dispossessed. I translated that into a social and cultural notion of homeland since it dealt with issues of collective memory and ancient and modern history. The social and cultural homeland is the experiences shared by a group. It also includes a history that the Palestinians are a part of and identity with.

Finally, as the discussion with informants covered their views on peace and the Israeli occupation, I came to find a different part of the notion of homeland. This I called the political homeland. It covers views on nationhood, statehood and the peace process. It is the ground for the politicians' work. It also has more pragmatic implications on the daily life of Palestinians and their future.

In the process of analyzing the data, I will explore each dimension of homeland separately. I will also point out the relationships of each of these facets to each other. These themes are linked to the central argument. For instance, one cannot necessarily

expect that homeland corresponds to the nation or state. It is clear from the data presented below that the situation is much more complex. Whereas for some informants, homeland is associated mainly with geographical features (landscape, land, flora, villages and towns); for others, the word refers to personal matters relating to one's place in the world. For others, the word is more equated with state and political borders.

4.1 Lexical Analysis

Following my observations and interviews, I gathered three terms that are useful in understanding 'homeland' in the classical Arabic language⁴⁰ and in the Palestinian dialect. The Palestinian dialect is the colloquial usage of the Arabic language in Palestine. It is a particular dialect that differentiates itself from Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian, or other Arab dialects. In the Middle East, the Palestinian dialect offers information that the person speaking is of Palestinian origin. In Palestine for example, there are also dialects that are characteristic of cities and villages. A Jaffite or Hebronite can be identified when a person speaks in a certain way or uses certain expressions. In the following section I will present some terms and their meaning. They are to a degree synonymous but differ subtly depending on the context in which they are used.

The first significant term concerning 'homeland' is *El-Blad*. It is a colloquial word from the classical Arabic word, *Bilad* (the plural of country) and *Balad* (the singular form). It is used in Middle Eastern countries, mainly Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.⁴¹ This term is somewhat nebulous, as is the term homeland in English. Palestinians use it to refer to historical Palestine (pre-1948). Examples of usage include:

⁴⁰ Classical Arabic is the official language of the media (T.V., newspapers, radio). Colloquial Arabic differs in each Arab country. It is the language of everyday life, used in daily talk. It can and does include classical Arabic words.

⁴¹ The majority of Middle Eastern countries speak Arabic except Iran and Turkey, who speak Persian and Turkish respectively.

“*El-Blad rahat*”, meaning the “homeland is gone”, or “*Ana Nazil Alaa Li-Blad*”, meaning “I am traveling to homeland.” I observed in Ramallah and Gaza City that Palestinians also use it interchangeably to mean Palestine and homeland in daily discussions.

El-Blad can also mean all the Middle Eastern Arab countries. It is a regional reference to the Fertile Crescent. In this context, it is usually used by Palestinians who live in exile to refer to the region of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. For example, a Palestinian traveling to Jordan would say, “I am going to *Li-Blad*.” In addition, a Palestinian refugee from Lebanon, and living in Canada could refer to Lebanon as *Li-Blad*.

This use of terminology is very important in understanding the concept of homeland in the general Middle Eastern context. One should also note that it is a particular term used by Palestinians in exile when referring to Palestine. It is also used upon return to refer to Palestine and/or the West Bank and Gaza. In the use of that term, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, there is a depth and dimension to the word itself that includes the emotional and cultural components of one’s homeland. Implicit is the notion that homeland cannot be divided.

The term *El-Blad*, also as demonstrated by Hammer (2001), is more of a cultural homeland than a political one. There is also a significant emotional dimension to the term that I understood from my informants.

The word *Balad* (country), *Baladi* (my country) and *El-Blad* were used frequently by my informants in discussing homeland. *Muneeb*, a 50-year-old Palestinian man who is a director in the Ministry of Trade, explained that “the best *Balad* is the one that carries you. There is no *Balad* (country) better than another.” This *Balad* or *El-Blad* (country)

is the country where you can live freely, a place you can belong to. *Samira* remembered that, “When we were invited in exile for coffee, we would drink to ‘*bil-Bilad*’, ‘in hope of returning to our homeland.” *Khalil* also said that *Baladi* (his country) is the place where one grew up and where there is family. It is the homeland of one’s experience; it is about personal heritage.

Watan, a word from classical Arabic, is the second term meaning homeland. It is also used in everyday language. The term ‘*Watan*’ does not necessarily indicate a homeland with borders, but it may have borders. It can therefore refer to a state but not necessarily. Palestine, which is referred to as *Watan*, is not a state. It differs from the word *El-Blad* in that it has a political connotation. It refers to a national homeland. It can also refer, as in the case of Palestine, to an imaginary national homeland.

Other words are derived from the word *Watan*. *Muwatin* means a citizen. *Watani* means my homeland. As my data indicates, *Watan* refers also to all Arab countries as the Arab homeland, *Al-Watan Al-Arabi*. This is also a national reference to the Arabs as a nation, and to all Arab countries, as the Arab homeland.

Finally, the word Palestine in Arabic is *Falasteen*. Its usage concords with the argument made in this paper that it refers to the pre-1948 borders. *Falasteen*, the homeland, is different from *Falasteen*, the state. Though reference to Palestine or *Falasteen* in the media and political arenas refers to the West Bank and Gaza, when the term Palestine (*Falasteen*) is used, it also refers to all of historical Palestine. Palestine, the homeland of its native inhabitants (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Palestinians) is the personal, socio/cultural, and national/political homeland.

This suggests that with regard to homeland, the multiple terms used can be seen as synonymous as they refer to the same place. A probable explanation is the complexity and subtlety of the Arabic language itself. It is characteristic to find different words referring to the same object, but there are implied differences suggested in the context in which they are used or the way they are said. The subtlety of the Arabic language allows for such interplay. It has the ability to create words from original roots. The poetic character of the language is reflected in the cultural use of words: homeland is an example of such a term that has its own poetical use.

There are observable differences in the words used to signify homeland. Where *El-Blad* has a personal/emotional and cultural component to it, *Watan* is the national homeland. Both *El-Blad* and *Watan* refer to the pre-1948 land, the national land and also cultural and personal elements. However, all three terms are anchored in cultural space and milieu. This is where the use of *El-Blad* is a resistance to the naming process and hence to the occupation itself. In this way, the Israeli occupier cannot change the cultural and personal choice of naming.

4.2 Homeland Articulated

In this section, I will discuss how PLO returnees articulated homeland, discussed the ideal and its value. This discussion will begin to explain the notion of homeland for the PLO returnees and what it signifies to them. They spoke of a relationship with an occupied place (land), the experience of exile, and a re-construction and evaluation of homeland upon return. Based on this discussion, I make the argument that Palestine as a homeland differs from the notion of the Palestinian state. The Palestinian state is only one dimension of the relationship of PLO returnees to their homeland.

I will begin first by presenting some of the personal expressions regarding Palestine that were used by informants:

Homeland is pride (*Karamah*), identity (*Hawiyeh*), safety (*aman*), land (*ard*), rights (*haq*), love (*mahabeh*), stability (*istikrar*), dedication (*ikhlas*), giving (*aata 'a*), belonging (*intima 'a*)...It is feeling that you are part of this land, like having a mother and father.

The social and cultural homeland was expressed as follows:

It is a land that protects you...It is one's name, continuance across generations, traditions and customs, land, relatives, deep feeling of safety, the life you chose, roots of this life...If one has no *Watan*, there is no homeland and therefore no dignity and no sense of being...Homeland is life, which includes everything, and everything in one's life is dependent on it...It is priceless... It is one's identity, history, social life, building one's economy, cultural heritage, future prospects for one's children and people..."It is the landscape, the place, nature (rocks, sea, seashore, trees, flowers, soil).

The political homeland is:

A place of defiance...It is an institutional system, democracy, and security...It is a matter of liberty, independence, and freedom of movement...

These expressions, in what they envision as their ideal homeland and state, are the missing elements of homeland in Palestine. Central to this discussion with the returnees is their identification of a need for a 'real homeland'. I believe what is meant by it is first of all pragmatic issues like the end of Israeli occupation, and building of the Palestinian state. The other aspect of homeland is the romantic and idealistic vision of what they wish their homeland to be, their personal relationship to their homeland.

Palestine as an ideal is integral in the vision of homeland; it is envisioned as including all that one needs in one's personal, social, cultural, and political life. The ideal is not present now and perhaps may not all be present in the future Palestinian homeland, but they are what make the concept of homeland live in people's psyches. As experienced by returnees, who were all exiled, the conceptual ideal has been built outside of homeland and has been brought back with them into the land. The ideals that are seen

to be missing, are set against 'what they actually did return to', that is the experience of occupation.

In being denied a state to this day, and in resisting occupation, the ideal becomes exaggerated. It expands because most of it is not actualized. It emerges out of being denied and out of missing out on many aspects of a 'normal' human being's experience as a citizen of a state. It is also a product of a culture of national resistance. In resistance, the ideal of homeland remains what supports resistance. The ideal is what holds exiled Palestinians together. It is what keeps their dreams alive. In other words, PLO returnees and their vision of homeland, their ideals, their emotions, are a product of their exile and a product of the national struggle. That ideal of homeland I argue, which includes more than the political dimension, will remain so even after the emergence of the State of Palestine. It is the ideal that works against the Zionist project and Zionization of Palestine. It is therefore important in understanding the concept of homeland of Palestine as related by PLO returnees.

Fatima is troubled by Palestine's history. According to her, Palestine's occupation created a victim of a homeland and its people. The Palestinian return to it demands that they rebuild a place that has seen much destruction and pain. She feels that this has not happened yet. The Israeli occupation is still present and the Palestinians have not shown the changes they want to see in their homeland. In her words:

In my opinion Palestine, is a victim, and historically has been a victim. Its continuing occupation victimized it. Its history victimized it - the conquerors, all until the Zionists and failing to give back her rights, to create for her roots in the land, roots of the people. Palestine is its people. It is the Palestinian people that are brought back a part of it... So if its people were denied living there, Palestine has nothing to do with it. The human being is the base of the flaw. So I still see Palestine as a victim. The dream I used to see so long ago that - Jerusalem was black, its

buildings and walls black - came back to me now because the present situation did not bring something new. We brought back a part of the land. I consider it a great achievement. The Palestinians came back to continue their journey, but there are other factors that control the situation here. We have to go through many stages to see the image of Palestine that thousands of martyrs wish to see and maybe our children's children will see the bright picture of Palestine. I still see that we failed Palestine, failed every single part of the Palestinian land. All those that returned, the insiders, the Arabs, all countries failed her. ...This land is virtuous, chaste, and not to be unpurified by our own destructive thoughts and the imprint of the occupiers. Palestinians could not build their institutions...build Palestine to be a beacon for the world. Palestine will stay on the world map for generations to come until the end of the world...Palestine is resistant...Palestine for me is a dream. We have this strong emotional tendency to empathize with the victim and Palestine was victimized, historically it was. It's holy places, it's streets, its people...Look at any country where there is war: you sympathize with the country that is attacked and its rights taken. You feel good when the Soviets leave Afghanistan: let its people deal with it. You feel good when American marines leave the Gulf and the Gulf remains for its people. This is an expression of the rights the land, the soil, and the human being. Therefore, Palestine is not only a land. It has a value coming from its suffering. If you only count the numbers of martyrs, this alone is an incentive to place a greater value on the holiness of this land they sacrificed for. Homeland (*Watan*) is valuable. One measures homeland according to its meaning. Palestine needs to be liberated...Do you think it is a basic right, to hold a passport? We did not have passports – one time you hold one from Iraq, another time from Yemen. Every time you are in a place they take you to jail because your passport is illegal. What I mean is the sum of all this experience molded a person. It was a building process of a not normal human being. It gave him more patience, knowledge and experience of much pain. If you search deep inside this person, this experience changes his very nature. A human being is made to handle certain things. He has certain capacities. Our nervous system was made to handle more. People have suffered for a long time; their bodies have given up. They have heart attacks caused by the stress. Its advantage on the human level is that it gave him a feeling with problems of other human beings and also world problems. It gave the importance of preserving ones integrity and the beautiful things in one's life ...What brought us to our homeland, should bring all together...I came back in 1996 from Tunisia. ...When you feel estranged in your homeland, it becomes harder to talk freely. This feeling of being exiled is created from a group of factors. You come back saying 'if this was a tent I am happy in it more than any other part of the world'. It is your land, and you returned. It is a nice feeling but it is good to look forward, see the bigger picture, and change ones views and perceptions ... Will the situation here stay the

same? Nothing continues as it is...I lived a period when I was depressed and the only thing I felt united with was the sea (in Gaza). I felt exiled with the sea. I forgot it was the sea. I would be walking and say 'oh my God, what happened to me?' When I did not feel good, I would go and sit for two, three, four hours and feel calmer. I was really upset because there was a gap between the sea, and me and I said no the sea has nothing to do with it and I should love it. You unite again with the thing that you shouldn't lose. Therefore, one should always read oneself, read one's feelings, one's hardships, look for its reasons, and hope that this situation does not continue forever, and that it changes to something better. Nothing is forever. There has to be days to come when things will be better. (July 2000, Gaza – transcribed and translated from Arabic by the author)⁴²

While they had left the homeland they once lived in, they were joined in exile with the national dream of liberating it. They do not know how Palestine has changed, though they might have watched it on TV, or were told by visitors. Each one created his or her homeland. Like a child who dreams of a place called homeland. A child not at home, anywhere in the world. They created their homeland and maintained it in exile. Some died. Some fought and struggled for the 'Cause'. Some were injured. Some were challenged morally, gave up their national ethics, and paid the price of their integrity. They lived many experiences in different places. They constructed their homeland from what they knew and what they dreamed of returning to it. Therefore, it was a part of who they are. They were Palestinians with no homeland. These narratives are a testimony of their experience, in all its faults and rights, in all its ideals and dreams, in all its disappointments, hurt and pain. What kept them dreaming and telling their story on the world? Their story is a story of a national struggle, but it is also a personal one. In these stories what can be articulated about the homeland in Palestine? (Personal Field notes- May 12, 2000)

4.2.1 Homeland: The Personal Vision

The primary feature that captures the notion of homeland in Palestine for Palestinian returnees is that it is an ideal, connected with every other feature of Palestine that will be talked about in the following discussion. It is an ideal that is romanticized and has been guarded in exile and allowed to be exaggerated. As Malkki (1995) notes,

⁴² All interviews that are quoted in this dissertation were conducted in Arabic. They were all transcribed and translated by the author.

idealization and romanticization are essential in maintaining the cohesiveness of the community and the memory and image of homeland in exile.

The PLO returnees have constructed their homeland from their inner personal spaces (mental and emotional) and also within the framework of the national project. In the beginning, the dream of realizing that ideal was to liberate all of Palestine from Israeli occupation. Now, this has been changed to forming a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sometimes this ideal is expressed this way, "I dream of it as a state based on justice and civil laws, based on democracy and pluralism. I dream that it would have a unique economy. It can give us an honorable life in all its dimensions." (Khalil) The dream of return is part of the construction of homeland. Even with the disappointments of returning to an occupied place the ideal of a homeland, of having a state, as it is politically translated at this time, remains.

Other disappointments include the clash in the social relations between insiders and outsiders, and the role of the PNA. Supposedly the homeland issue will be resolved with the creation of a Palestinian State. However, as returning Palestinians reveal, the pre-1948 Palestine, is a separate entity, the homeland of the three religions, and the homeland that is, as Fatima said, "The beacon for the entire world". Part of that homeland is being negotiated into a state.

Omar does not believe in having conditions put on his homeland.

This homeland, you have to come to it without any conditions. We have to 'burn all the ships behind us' and not look back. Here is the base, in homeland...even if there are problems in *Al-Watan*, even it was insecure, yet it gives you a feeling of security that you cannot find in any other place...It is the life we choose and love...It is the roots of this life and its future prospects (September 3, 2000 – Ramallah).

The ideal includes a sense of loss of what was before. It includes a historical relationship with the land, and a spiritual attachment to its religious significance. Upon return, the ideal is subjected to questioning. It is still experienced as real, since it is the force behind the political struggle. One informant, Ibrahim, expressed that “the longer the distance in time, the more homeland is idealized. It is psychological, cultural and political. We create our own homeland and believe it exists in reality but it does not exist.” The homeland exists as a real notion because there is a group that maintains it in its shared collective memory.

The ideal of Palestine emerges out of the great value given to the place. This value is what keeps the ideal alive. If the ideal does not have value: personal, communal, and national in this case, the Palestinian cause will not exist. This value is crucial in understanding the concept of homeland in Palestine. It is a product of history, memory, pride, idealism, and a personal connection to homeland. According to Khalil, homeland is the most valuable thing to a person. “There is no human being that does not want to go back to their *Watan*. To a human being, *Al-Watan* is the most valuable thing one can own and be proud of.”

Its value is closely connected with feelings about ‘one’s being.’⁴³ As Fatima said, “Palestine is not only a land, it stands for a value.” Shukri took this further: “Palestine is the soul and the body, the air you breathe. How can one let go of his homeland if he is a normal human being.”

Omar said, “*Watan* is a value that you feel and you cannot measure it.” It involves feelings of ownership that emerge out of memories one has of a land owned in

⁴³ I use the expression ‘one’s being’ repeatedly throughout the thesis. It was expressed by informants in Arabic as *kayan*. It refers to the self, to one’s identity, and to one’s feelings. In sum, it is one’s whole being.

the past. This said, the value of Palestine goes beyond gain or loss. It is not a business matter. In this equation of value rests the emotional web that seems to bind the elements of Palestine's value in these individual experiences.

It is the value of the land and memories on it. It is the value where one finds her/himself at home. It is found in the connection to the homeland in a physical way, in terms of land and in an emotional, personal way. It is the significance found in the dance of the personal with the social and political.

Exile, in the case of Palestinian returnees, is an attribute of homeland. Homeland is maintained in exile. This notion of homeland was also constructed there. The working definition that I will use of exile is that it is a state of being physically forced away from homeland. It is accompanied by feelings of deprivation and a sense of loss. It has an emotional component related to missing the homeland while away from it, or feeling displaced from one's homeland. Exile in the Palestinian experience has played an important role in defining and shaping the Palestinian ideal of homeland. It can be postulated that exile and the continued occupation of Palestine by Israel is the reason behind the emotionally and nationalistically charged notion of homeland in Palestine. The meaning and value of homeland can be determined by the intensity of the exilic experience and the degree of intensity can produce different experiences and hence different views of homeland.

Though this work is about PLO returnees' experiences, exiles generally experienced a life of instability, movement, and uncertainty. Their life, tied to a political struggle, was not taken for granted, and some suffered in exile, although some enjoyed a high standard of living in exile for example in Tunisia. Their movements were dependent

on where the PLO found a base. Because of their unstable position in host countries (holding laissez-passer, inability to travel, holding illegal passports), their life was contingent upon what happened on the political front. Therefore, the experience in the host country and the duration of exile are factors that help explain the context for the concept of homeland that emerged for the PLO returnees.

For many PLO members, exile was the experience of being refugees. The refugee experience varied depending where you lived as a refugee. Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon had and have the worst living conditions, compared to refugees in Syria and Jordan. Ahmed, a refugee who lived in Lebanon, describes how he feels about being a refugee: "Refugees lost the human rights of movement, education, and work. After 1982, the conditions worsened for refugees especially in Lebanon. We were not allowed to work even after being there for fifty years."

Hakim: "Until 1995, I always felt like a homeless person, 'stateless' with no nationality. Every passport had a different name and birth date. There was no *Watan*, and therefore no documents. I was permitted to travel only to a few places. I obtained my first birth certificate in 1995 when I came back." The experience of having fake documents is particular to PLO members. The frustration expressed about not having a homeland and not having one's own passport to travel freely is an important part of the life in exile.

Mufeed, a caricaturist, states, "In Tunisia, I wanted to bring Jerusalem to me by drawing it. There is a story behind my drawings." He expresses a certain emotionality and connection with Jerusalem through art.

Imagination and yearning for homeland in exile express, as in the following story, the need to make contact and keep the past memories alive. According to Mohammed, "In Berlin, we had a training bicycle that I used to train on and I would imagine the old house in Gaza, walk in Gaza's streets from the train station to the beach. I would stay a long time on the bicycle, my kids would say. I would say, 'Wait, I haven't reached my destination!' I would say, 'I still have not reached that Palestine school that I used to go to'".

As briefly touched upon earlier, one's sense of self is closely linked to the meaning of Palestine. Palestine's issue is just but unresolved. The lives of returnees centered on working for the cause. They lived it. They moved with it. It was the force behind their personal and social involvement.

Each informant had his or her own personal experience within the political cause. This may not be true of all Palestinians. This group, however, driven by different reasons to be a part of it, took up the struggle in exile and fought for it on the international scene. Hence, it is in one way or another involved with their sense of themselves, of who they are. If Palestine is the homeland of their memories, their land, the struggle for a just cause, then their attitudes about a resolution go beyond political solutions. It will not be completely resolved by the creation of the Palestinian state. What would a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza change of the relationship these returnees have with the homeland of the past? Would the homeland of their past be transformed with the political solution to become the homeland of the West Bank and Gaza? I argue that this will not be the case since we are talking about personal and cultural issues.

This personal relationship between Palestine and one's being feed into each other. As Cuba and Hummon (1993) indicate, a place's identity is connected to an individual and gives meaning to one's sense of self. Ameen, who was imprisoned for seven years and was involved with the PLO, stated that "all my being is Palestinian, ideologically, my dignity, my feeling of security. Palestine is the self in all its meaning. It is something special not easily known by someone who is not Palestinian. If I abandon Palestine and my Palestinian-ness, I am nothing." Here is the expression of a personal relationship with the place, the personification of Palestine, as was evident in Fatima's earlier words.

Palestine is central to these interviewed returnees. It is central in their feeling about who they are and what they are. They cannot define their being without Palestine and without their Palestinian national and cultural identity. Khalil feels that this land is worth sacrificing his life for. This is because he sees it as part of his being.

I am called Palestinian because there is a land, a *watan* called Palestine. Therefore, I am a part of this land. For a human being, it is like having a mother and a father...without Palestine I am lost in the world. No human being does not sacrifice or feel proud of his land (August 24, 2000 – Ramallah).

The Palestinian homeland is occupied, transformed, and lacks the basic human level of dignified existence, therefore the struggle for it and for the type of life desired continues.

What does it mean to sacrifice one's life for Palestine? It means Palestine, in this context becomes the symbol of one's being, worth dying for. In discussions with Palestinian returnees, I was told how many friends and comrades have died for the struggle. Loss of life has emerged as one of the main elements in regaining ones homeland. Fatima said that she knew long time ago that she was a potential martyr. Her

life was part of her death. Her death was part of her personal involvement in the struggle for Palestine. Self-sacrifice is not only life-sacrifice. It is devoting one's whole life and being for the struggle.

Sacrificing one's life does not necessarily mean supporting suicide bombings. Jameel expressed a candid view of suicide bombings, which can be seen as a form of self-sacrifice for the Palestinian cause. "Initially I am against suicidal work. I struggle and I am ready to defend my people's cause until death...but why death, why not until life. We do not need more martyrs, widows, or orphans, especially us."

The personal element in the notion of homeland materializes in memory of a physical home, a house, in one's homeland. Home grounds the intangible notion of homeland in space and place. The home becomes the place, the locus, of family memories and lineage. As Hadi said, "We always knew that the homes we were in were not for us. We came to homeland without our clothes. We do not have anything. The rent we used to pay outside, now we are paying it as a down payment for an apartment. This is the difference. We have a house and this is part of stability. It is the most important thing in a human being's life. A home is one of the principal ways to feel stable." Having a home in one's homeland expresses a sense of security and ownership.

The other element of home is the past home, the home that was part of the pre-1948 homeland which was left behind. This past home is emotional and is connected by memories there. It is the home that is linked to longing for what was left behind. Some informants did go back to see their homes. Ameen told me about his trip back to his home in Jaffa. A Palestinian family lives in it now and they did not allow him to go in and see his house. He expressed distress about this experience, but said that he will go

back and one day he will be let in. He described how he left his school bag on the top shelf of his closet, when his father told him that he did not have to take it with him. They were going to be back in a couple of weeks. The vivid memory he described of his home was his connection with his past and his land. He said that the wound of leaving his home was alive in him to this day.

Jameel too made a trip to see his home, "I went to Haifa, of course. Until now, my dad's stores are still closed, the same as they were before. The house though was demolished."

I present here my father's story of his return to his house in Jaffa. He speaks about his emotional connection to his house and his memories there. It also expresses his longing for the past that has changed since. To him, it is about the value of his home in his memory.

After leaving Jaffa in 1948 as a seven year old, my father made his first returning trip to Palestine. Though he did make a visit to the West Bank, in 1965 and could possibly have gone to visit after the 1967 war, as he said, "I just couldn't take it emotionally. I felt it was impossible for me to be able to go back in these conditions". I asked him to come on one of my trips and he kept saying "not this time, maybe on your next trip".

He accepted the peace in Oslo, but inside of him he couldn't accept or deal with the pain of leaving and losing his homeland. His trip back was filled with tears, curses, pain and joy all at the same time. Could it be possible that pain can be so intricately mixed with joy and happiness that one cannot distinguish one from the other? That was how he experienced his returning visit. His home in 'Yaffa' is still there. The moment he saw it and was allowed to enter by the new inhabitants, he fell on the couch crying. He tried to hold his tears but couldn't. The house to him was a metaphor for what happened to Palestine. It is still there, but changed, with new inhabitants – a Palestinian family and a Jewish family share it. The house is a symbol of what happened to Palestine, he said. The two families have divided the villa into two parts, and the living room is still in dispute; they don't know how to divide it. This is Palestine's story too.

"This is my room," he pointed just outside a room whose door was locked. "There I stayed with my father and mother." Since he was the youngest, he slept in their room. He went to the garden, and pointed out the fig tree, the lemon tree, the orange tree... "We played there, there was a fountain" which was covered with bushes ...deserted, not taken care of, barren that is how the garden was. He found a tile from the salon (with patterns just like the ones inside the house). He asked the woman who was showing him around if he could have it "Of course you can, she said. He went to the window, and pointed to one corner. "There was my bed and here was the mizrab⁴⁴ which I used to have dreams about at night

When we went to the house, he was looking for something, a physical reminder. There were two window frames. The glass was broken and what was left was deteriorating wood, with traces of the original paint. After asking if he could take it, he struggled to unscrew the window. It was as if the window itself did not want to let go. Finally it came out. His face lit up, and he held it closely. If memory can be carried physically, and something can come to represent one's past, the tile and the window frame were memory made manifest.

He never made another visit to his home. He said, "It is not the same. The Palestine I knew 55 years ago is not the same, and at my age now I cannot start again on what is no longer there...(Fouad Orabi, May 13, 2000 – Jaffa)⁴⁵

There were others who for psychological and ideological reasons did not go back to visit their homes. Yasser has a close relationship to his house. His political views about occupation keep him from visiting his house. When I asked him about his home he said, "I did not go back because it is still occupied. I still did not go to the place I was born and I do not want to go. It does cross my mind. When people ask me why, I say. 'Did you go?' They say yes. They would say. 'I left feeling bad and my soul strangled'. I am delaying this pain for later."

⁴⁴ A Mizrab is a long tube that drains water when it rains from the rooftop, down the building.

⁴⁵ I have included my father's trip back to his house and hometown Jaffa as part of the data since it is part of the experience of return of my informants. The only difference compared to other quotes used is that it was not an interview but on the experience of being there and the exchange that took place between me him, and the inhabitants, when he visited his house.

Sami expressed his connection and memory of his house in Old Jerusalem. His visit was emotional; he felt that the stones of the Old City were talking to him.

I left Old Jerusalem when I was 4 years old. Our house is still there but I do not have the right to live in it because I have a Palestinian Authority I.D. I can go and visit. The house is in the middle of Old Jerusalem.... I did go to our house in Jerusalem. My aunt and cousins are there. I feel familiarity with the house and its Islamic architecture, its being, the fountain, and the cemetery. When I visited the cemetery, I cannot express it. I cried for the place and for my grandparents. The stones of the place were talking to me. They are the symbol of the land, the homeland. The stones of the place are my selfhood, my history, my people and origins... It means everything to me. When I go to Jerusalem, I salute the walls and the place. I feel that the stones of the walls of Jerusalem become personified and have a heartbeat. It is beyond expression (June 27, 2000 – Ramallah).

In documenting the experiences of PLO returnees, Palestine lived with individuals in their personal and collective memory. It was simplified and also exaggerated. It was their way of giving life to Palestine in exile. Within their personal memories is the homeland they once lived in – their houses, their families, their school and their life.

Homeland is about the memory of generations that were passed down. It connects a person to a place. Ashraf described where he gathered most of his memory of Palestine:

Homeland is not just a place of living but one needs things to connect with like a tree, a historical relation with cultivated land, and falling in love with a girl...Homeland is about the memory of generations. It is the feeling that connects the human being to a place. We were denied this feeling, and it was compensated by our family's memories...In exile, my parents would talk. In exile they felt estranged. Their talk created my memories and made me want to return...my relationship with my mother and father was more political than emotional. We could not talk about social or emotional topics but only about politics. My political memory is more dominant and did not allow me to have memory of other places. It happened this way (July 17, 2000 – Gaza City).

To Amin and Omar also, homeland was a place of their memories. Omar shared that “You have beautiful memories of a land that is yours, a feeling of ownership. It is the land of your childhood. These memories are not born twice.” Though all of the PLO returnees that I interviewed have lived in other places and had memories of those places, memories of their childhood in Palestine were engrained in their sense of Palestinian-ness.

Memory creates a sense belonging to Palestine. In trying to explain the value of homeland, Omar described how he feels this love and belonging, “*Watan* is not simple. It is not easy to understand, however my belonging to *Watan* is simple, and easy. My love is taken for granted. I have to understand *Al-Watan* in a better way to love it more.”

According to Jameel, he feels that he owns his homeland and everything he builds on it is for him and his children. Jameel feels that his only belonging is to Palestine,

I do not have a feeling of belonging to anything I did for myself outside of Palestine. I feel that every tree I see grown here is for me and for my children. Even though I rent my house, I feel this homeland is mine (September 16, 2000 – Gaza City).

Memory feeds into the feeling of belonging and builds it. Khalil feels that he belongs because he has memories of his homeland, he experienced exile, and his return was all the more important because of that:

This is my country. I was brought up here. My family is here. I always felt like a foreigner in all the places I have been to. There are restrictions on your residency and movement. I feel a sense of belonging to my homeland. I had no other choice but to return when I was allowed. I tried so many times before Oslo but was denied. My belonging to the PLO was for the liberation of Palestine and to return to it... This sense of belonging is all related to the Palestinian connection with their homeland, land, and country. As long as there is a desire to return even for a visit, it says much about belonging to this homeland (August 24, 2000 – Ramallah).

Lavin and Agatstein (1984) note that the length of the experience in a particular place also develops the degree of belonging. In the case of the Palestinian exiles, what Palestine represented for them created the sense of belonging and the desire to strengthen it. My informants talked about their experience of being displaced, dispossessed, having memories in their homeland, losing family members and in some cases being imprisoned. Belonging was the motivation for each informant's involvement with the PLO and their dedication for their homeland in exile. The notion of homeland in Palestine is connected to a sense of belonging not only to the political homeland, but also to the homeland they longed for in exile.

Longing stems out of the image that exiles have of their past experiences in Palestine. This is the longing, repeatedly expressed, by my respondents: to go back to their homes, to be able to live and move freely in their homeland, see the familiar landscape, their cities, towns and villages, smell the air and experience the beauty of nature. Returning to their homeland has satisfied some of this longing. Ibrahim talked about his longing to Palestine, after traveling for long periods. He feels happiest when he returns:

I do not miss any other place. I like to visit other places but not to live there. I have no regrets about returning. When I travel for long periods, I feel the longing to come back and when I come back, I feel happy. I feel at home. For example, when I am coming back from the borders in the car, I remember that I am in Palestine and I feel very happy. Why, I do not know. It shapes my whole existence (September 25, 2000 – Ramallah).

Longing is a part of the exiled relation to homeland. Longing for a place is emotional and is a product of the personal and social meanings attached to that place called homeland. (Lavin and Agatstein, 1984) It is about the ideals, the wishes and the dreams. It is also about memories in ones homeland. As I listened to my informants who

were all exiles, they longed to return to their homeland. Nabila, Shukri and Ameen felt this longing for their homeland while in exile. *Rami* stated that his longing is connected to living in exile and the feelings of rejection in a refugee camp.

Memory is multiple. It is also constructed in a particular personal, social and historic context. Memory can create a more beautiful past and more idealized place. It allows the good and pleasant memories to predominate over other less appealing. Perhaps this serves the purpose of belonging, and by creating a simple construction of the past, to clear away the clouding of the lived experience in any place that obviously is not all good. Bowman (1994) discusses the dynamics of memory construction, and suggests the emergence of multiple memories in one group. Memory in a national struggle can serve to homogenize the historic past, presenting it as one. Memory hence serves a particular purpose for returnees who lived a great part of their lives as exiles. It holds their past together. And above all, for the PLO returnees, it gives the reason for their political struggle.

The day of leaving is a very particular memory recounted by all the PLO returnees. It is important because it was the beginning of their exile. I will document an example of this memory. The day of forced departure is a day remembered by the generation that left with their parents in 1948 particularly. It was a day of displacement and dispossession that is highly emotional in content and pivotal in the construction of the exiled memory of Palestine. Muhammad describes the day he left:

It was a big, risky trip. We left in a cargo train wearing a few pieces of clothes over each other, but still left most of our stuff. I was 9 years old and was kneeling in the airplane. My mother and sisters were nervous. We did not know the destiny of our father and family. We left because it was dangerous. There were

battles between settlers and Palestinians. The Deir Yassin Massacre⁴⁶ was a matter of 'land or honor'" (*A'rd*) so my parents left out of fear for their honor... When we think about it now, there was a lot of propaganda and it wasn't all real. We did not leave willingly. It is difficult to leave your home but you have to if you have no other choice. Palestinians lost a lot when they left their homeland (July 16, 2000 – Gaza City).

4.2.2 Social and Cultural Homeland

As memory is central in the personal relation to homeland in Palestine, history is the social and cultural context that memory is constructed in. The history of Palestine creates a social and cultural attachment to the place. As Rami pointed out, "It is the point of balance between the past and the future."

It is also the Holy Land. It is the place central to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All three religions consider Palestine historically significance as the holy land. Therefore, because of its religious significance to the three religions, Jerusalem is pivotal in the present political struggle. The holy value of Palestine anchors the Palestinian connection with the land in religious significance.

Ibrahim talked about the unique place Palestine is because of its ancient history:

It is a very special place. Nowhere in the world is like Palestine. Three religions claim the place. Therefore, it is the subject of conflict, war, and search for meaning of existence for human beings. It had different civilizations- Greek, Roman, Armenian, Jewish, and others. They all left traces behind and added richness. Therefore, Palestine is pluralistic. It is not only Jewish, Christian, or Islamic. It cannot be. It is culturally pluralistic (September 25, 2000 – Ramallah).

It is important to say that the Palestinian struggle is above all national, and not religious. However, the religious significance is a factor in the national struggle. It becomes central in the issue of the occupation of East Jerusalem. Mufeed talked about the sacredness of the land of Palestine because of its religious significance.

⁴⁶The Deir Yassin massacre is one of the most important massacres in Palestinian history. The Irgun and Stern gangs led by Menahem Begin and Yitzaq Shamir conducted it. There were 245 Palestinians killed in the village of Deir Yassin, a western suburb of Jerusalem. This village does not exist today.

As important as Palestine's ancient history is, its modern history is central and more significant in this analysis of homeland. Palestine's modern history shows a pattern of victimization as a result of control and occupation. The Israeli occupation is the most recent. The victim theme is a recurrent one in the Palestinian experience and literature. The victimization officially began with the establishment of the state of Israel, and the dispossession and displacement of the Palestinians in 1948 and later on in 1967.

Part of the argument of this paper is that the element of victimization is very important to understand the struggle for Palestine. The Palestinian cause in its essence is ignited by the feeling of being victims, not only by Israel but also by the world including Arab countries. The homeland has been victimized. Forming a state will resolve, as I argue, a geographic and political facet in the struggle for Palestine but does not deal with the question of the victim homeland. Fatima, in the introduction of this chapter, talks about this view of the victimized Palestine. The victimized land of Palestine is personified, and in the struggle for its liberation it is steadfast.

Hadi expresses a view of Palestine that I have heard often while working in Palestine, which describes Palestine as having been raped and destroyed. This is a strong image that is recurrent in Palestinian discourse. I believe that the idea of associating what happened to Palestine with rape is closely connected with the beginning of the dispossession of Palestinians. The early Zionists have used the issue of honor with the Arab Palestinians, knowing it is a sensitive issue, as propaganda to facilitate the evacuation of the land. It gives it a value that is worth struggling for. Therefore, if Palestine is a victim, of rape, then it needs to be fought for. Perhaps such imagery is

being used to keep a memory of violation closely attached to what happened to the Palestinian homeland.

In the section above I have discussed how Palestine is seen as a victim. First, it is the land has been victimized by occupation. Second, the Palestinians who were exiled from their land were also victimized. I believe that what emerges from the above discussion is the centrality of land in the discourse on homeland in Palestine and the Palestinian question.

I will discuss briefly the importance of land before the emergence of Israel in Palestinian lives. Prior to the Israeli occupation, land was very important particularly in rural areas that were predominant in Palestine. After occupation, an interesting transformation took place. This was land that had previously been viewed as personal property. It then became also a national land. The private and national land was now occupied. Shehadeh's 'The Third Way' brings a perspective of those who had remained in 1948 land, which is interesting to point out here. He expresses something of the insider's relationship with the land, which was echoed in my discussions with my respondents. He writes:

...we who have lived a silent love for this land are left with the grim satisfaction of seeing that the Israelis will never know our hills as we do. They are already making endless, ignorant mistakes. For all their grand rhetoric, they are strangers. We *samidin* (steadfast) may be turning into pornographers – but our love is not forgotten. The reason for our grief is also our strength (Bowman 1994:159).

In this description, Shehadeh expresses a relationship with the land that he says can be pornographic. The Israelis will not know this kind of love of the land as Palestinians do.

As I came to realize, land (*Al-Ard*) is a fundamental element to understand Palestine. It is also synonymous to homeland. As discussed in chapter three in the section on 'Space, Place, and Landscape', the struggle for Palestine takes an overt form in the land issue. Mufeed articulated that *Watan* is the land. The struggle for the homeland in Palestine would not have emerged if the land had not been occupied. As Agnew and Duncan (1989) have indicated, land is the physicality of place. It has personal and social significance in relation to homeland. If the political solution includes giving the 1967 land to the Palestinians, what happens to the land that Israel had occupied in 1948 in which it instated itself on? The question of the Palestinian homeland is raised in opposition to the Palestinian state. The land issue becomes the concern of the Palestinian state on 22% of historic Palestine.

Palestine is identified as a historical land. As Yasser pointed out, "This land that we are clinging to, called Palestine, has old, religious history and modern colonial history." Land in Palestine is therefore, about its history.

The land of one's homeland has intrinsic value. It includes everything that is of significance to one's life. The land is a matter of ownership. This ownership is about having a place to reside in, a country to be a legitimate citizen of, and a land to belong to. Samira believed that the feeling of ownership is generalized to all Palestinians who all feel that this land belongs to them, and they want to die there. Is Samira referring to the Palestinian state or the Mandatory Palestine? This question is central to the argument made in this dissertation; which Palestinian land do Palestinians own and which one do they refer to? I believe that the references to land made by my respondents and the people I discussed this with, were ambiguous. There is confusion over whether this refers

to the land in the West Bank and Gaza, or Mandated Palestine. Which one is the homeland?

In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the importance of the issue of the right of refugees to return to their lands and houses they were exiled from is one of the crucial unresolved issues. An agreement as to how many and where they should return has not been reached by the PLO and Israel. I believe this speaks of a rift between the political resolution and the human resolution of the issue of Palestinian homeland. The Palestinian refugees who left in 1948 believe that they should go back to their homes now in Israel proper. According to them, this is their homeland and they have the right to return to it.

Though this thesis is not about the issue of refugees, it is important to bring it out in the discussion. It highlights that homeland to refugees means the Mandate Palestine, the Palestine they left after the war in 1948. Again as indicated, this supports what I am arguing in this paper. There is a difference between the notion of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the notion of homeland in Palestine.

Since land is important in the discussion on the Palestinian homeland, Israeli settlements pose a great threat to the Palestinian state-to-be in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a land that has been occupied since 1967. For the Palestinian state, Israeli settlements create an issue about who has sovereignty and control over Palestinian land. The building of Israeli settlements and by-pass roads for the settlements are to divide Palestinian land. This is a key issue in the peace negotiations that is not settled yet. The idea behind the continued building of Israeli settlements is to create Bantustans within the

Palestinian state. Settlements are therefore statements of power. Israel builds settlements to impose their version of reality on the Palestinian landscape.

Land and landscape are both a part of understanding the social and cultural homeland in Palestine. When the land is occupied and the landscape is changed, the homeland is challenged. Though it questions the viability of the Palestinian state, it also speaks of the homeland in Palestine that has undergone many changes.

Finally, I learned from my discussions with PLO returnees that the human component is important, within the social and cultural aspects of the notion of homeland in Palestine. The human being is the key aspect who gives this notion a value and life, changes it, accepts and rejects it, and endows it personal, social and cultural, and political significance. The human being bridges these three parts of homeland. According to Mufeed, "*Watan* is the human being. It is his notions of this land, the cultural notion." Palestine as homeland comes to have a value because of those who lived in its land. Being cut away from its soil is not possible. Therefore, homeland cannot exist without the human experience of it. It would not exist without Palestinians giving their homeland its value. Fatima expressed that 'Palestine is its people'. It is its people that were able to bring back a part of the Palestinian homeland. Palestinians are the offspring of their homeland according to Sami and they have rights and responsibilities. What is missing in homeland is homeland itself, and not its citizens. Palestinians are the ones who will build it. In articulating the homeland in Palestine, the human being emerges as the building block.

4.2.3 The Political Homeland

In the political definition of homeland, Palestine is seen as part of the Arab homeland. That is the larger context in the struggle for Palestine. It becomes an Arab struggle. The Arab armies were involved in attempting to liberate Palestine in the wars of 1948 and then in 1967. Their defeat brought the PLO into existence and brought the struggle for Palestine into the hands of Palestinian leadership. Still however, it is considered to be a national Arab issue.

Samira said, "Palestine is Arab. It is not Palestinian but belongs to Arabs – one '*Bilad*'." While talking to Fatima, she eventually said, "I am not Palestinian in origin but because I belong to all the Arab land, I am ready to fight for it." Her identification as an Arab was with the Palestinian struggle, and hence she adopted the Palestinian identity and cause. Sami believes that "the entire Arab world is Palestine. It is the symbol for the Arab person in general. It is not only for Palestinians but for all human beings, Christian, Muslim, etc."

Palestine is a political homeland. It is the homeland that the politicians talk about and use in the national discourse. This vision would one day take the shape of a state. As Omar explains, "For a politician, *Watan* is geographic. It is an entity. It is society. How to build it and develop it is based on what politicians do. We will create *Watan* with what we can take, but to a human being *Watan* is life and the ability to live in it." The political homeland emerges for a political reason in reaction to occupation. It is geographic. It is about creating institutions and a social structure. It is the homeland that is bound by borders. It has a governing authority. Ashraf makes the distinction between

the political and the personal clear as there is a difference between personal feelings and the politics of homeland.

This follows the argument that I make here. The political homeland in Palestine is the subject of international controversy. The other aspects of it, the personal and socio-cultural, are not formulated directly in the political equation. They are still an important part of understanding homeland in Palestine. However, since the issue of Palestine is highly political, it is not a surprise to find that individuals such as the informants in this case talk about the political as personal as well in their understanding of their homeland in Palestine.

The political homeland becomes the dominant discourse. The formation of the political homeland is under the power of the PLO as it is the entity that is negotiating peace for the Palestinians. The PLO is guided by the Palestinian population in determining what can be compromised and what cannot. However, they are the ones making the political decisions. They are defining and voicing their dominant political view of a homeland in Palestine to the world. Their homeland takes a public, political form, regardless of whether it coincides with the Palestines of other groups within Palestinian society. The political discourse on the Palestinian homeland becomes in this context the official one.

Another aspect in discussing the political homeland is the relationship of the Palestinian politician to his/her homeland. It is a complex relationship. Fatima was open to discussing the inner power dynamics within the PNA. There are officials that are not corrupted and there are others that dominate and misuse their power. She scrutinizes the appointment of persons to positions for which they are not qualified. She criticizes

individuals working with her in the same ministry. They were not working for '*Watan*' but for their own interests. For Fatima that was very disheartening. This was a sign that the 'Palestinian house', as she called it, needed to be reorganized at the same time as the political problems need to be addressed. To her the organization of the Palestinian house was as important as dealing with the political issues. Hadi, on the other hand, believes that if the occupation ends, Palestinians would be able to deal with their internal problems. He was also aware of the practices of the PNA and critical of them. Fatima, however, thought that what the PNA was doing and the presence of individuals who were not working for *Watan*, would determine the strength of the 'Palestinian house' and hence the strength of the negotiations with Israel. This is interesting because it tells of the different voices within the PNA. Their views and their work influences what kind of political homeland is being created and also will determine what kind of state Palestine will be.

As the Palestinian authority is secular, the political homeland and the state-to-be were expressed as secular. Yasser expressed this: "*Watan* has to be secular. All world wars are religious. There is a need to live and there is space on earth to include all." Linked to this notion of the secular homeland is what Nour described. He sees Palestine as the British Mandate map, a bi-national state with citizens having equal rights and responsibilities. Jameel also agrees that it should be the democratic state of Palestine on British-mandated land with Jews, Christians, and Muslims living together. He further expressed that "I do not want a Palestinian state but a one-state solution because this way Palestinians and Israelis all live in Palestine." These views on a secular homeland are

important because they reveal what kind of state is being foreseen for Palestine by PLO returnees.

From my discussions with informants, peace emerges as a main theme when discussing the political aspect of homeland. Hadi believes that the secular state can offer peace and then one can live with dignity in a sovereign homeland. Yasser, who believes in the one-state solution, indicated that “real peace is only when Jews, Christians, and Muslims have the right to live anywhere in Palestine, in a democratic country with no Zionism, no extremism and racism. This is the only way for homeland.” The issue at stake here is ‘real peace’. ‘Real peace’ is connected with the end of occupation. It is also connected with a just solution to the conflict.

What is termed ‘real peace’ is a political term that means a resolution to the political issues of refugees, borders, water, East Jerusalem, and settlements. These are all part of the political homeland. However, what Yasser referred to is the cultural and human peace in a homeland where all can live. This I believe provides a deeper understanding to what ‘real peace’ is. It also suggests that dealing with political peace does not necessarily mean peace between two nations. However, it can be a prerequisite to it. As this chapter deals with all aspects of homeland in Palestine that are important, the issue of peace seems to connect with the three aspects of homeland I argue to exist. In addition, dealing with political issues does not necessarily mean that it resolves the other aspects of homeland in Palestine.

Returnees came to this reality after Oslo. The Israeli occupation changed the landscape, destroyed villages and dispossessed Palestinian cities, towns, and villages of their inhabitants.

According to Ashraf, he felt that he did not come to a liberated *Watan*. Mohammed also talks about returning to an occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Though these are supposedly marked as Palestinian Authority territories, they are, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, occupied by Israeli settlements, divided into areas A, B, and C. Their borders and the water and electricity distribution are under the direct control of Israel. *Watan* is not liberated because of the ever-visible signs of Israeli occupation. According to Yasser, "Before there was no homeland, and still there is no homeland". Many others share the reality we live in; the entire Arab homeland is divided." Muneeb also testifies to the changed homeland. "We did not take homeland back. We came back to a different society. How we remembered it or imagined it is wishful thinking. We have not achieved the notion of homeland yet, as sovereignty over *Watan* does not exist." According to Mufeed, occupation and the accumulation of suffering took away part of homeland. Jameel describes that he came to a changed homeland because of occupation. Ameen came back to an enchained, bound, besieged, and divided *Watan*.

The change, as discussed earlier, is in the transformed and divided homeland. It was evident that this is an issue to PLO returnees. The homeland of Mandated Palestine is, to the respondents, undividable. Though politically Israel is recognized and the 1948 land is not negotiable, the cultural and personal homeland comes to challenge this political recognition. I would add, as I understood from my informants, that though politically they might have no choice now, it is a conflict for them to accept the loss or the division of their original homeland. Salim asked me a question regarding the divided homeland, "Which *Watan* are you talking about the West Bank and Gaza? What about

the 1948 land and refugees?” According to Salim, he has difficulty seeing the 1948 areas, which are Israel now, as not part of *Watan*. From my discussion with the PLO returnees, some of which I have included here, I observed that this divided homeland in Palestine is a major issue.

The division between the West Bank and Gaza is also seen as problematic. According to Shukri, there is one Palestine. Palestine with its mandate historical borders cannot be divided. There is a problem of connecting the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The geographic distance between them is a concern about the shape of this homeland-to-be. He is not talking about a homeland in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but about a Palestinian state. These are two different things. A divided state, though a problem, is acceptable but not a homeland. Khalil gave up on the idea of the Mandated Palestine being the Palestinian state. He sees the 1967 borders (West Bank and Gaza Strip) as the state of Palestine. The Mandated Palestine emerges as the cultural and personal homeland while the political homeland is in the West Bank and Strip.

To summarize, these statements supports my argument in this paper. The political homeland, now the West Bank and Gaza Strip, is different from the cultural and personal homeland of Mandated Palestine. The political homeland can be negotiated into a state, with much difficulty considering the geographic separation. However the Mandated Palestine seems to go beyond the map. It is the map that includes all the elements of homeland described in this chapter. This map remains a part of Palestinian identity, memory and sense of connection to Mandated Palestine.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a two-tiered investigation of homeland. The first was the lexical analysis in which I demonstrated the different references in language to Palestine as homeland: *El-Blad*, *Watan*, and *Falasteen*. There is a difference between *El-Bilad*, the personal and cultural homeland, and *Watan* and *Falasteen*, which refer more to the political homeland. The lexical analysis suggests the presence of different but co-existing aspects of homeland. Though each term has a different connotation, it is important to demonstrate the use of the different terms for the word homeland in Arabic, and its particular use in the Palestinian case.

The lexical analysis was taken further to the second level of the analysis of how homeland was articulated by respondents. I presented three themes of significance in understanding the notion homeland in Palestine: the personal, social and cultural, and the political homeland. While they do not exist exclusively of each other, each aspect alone provides a particular understanding of homeland in Palestine.

On the personal level, respondents expressed their own view and relationship to their homeland. This personal homeland involved viewing homeland as an ideal. Homeland had its value to respondents. This value emerged from personal history such as having a house. The personal experiences of exile and memory construction as a result of it are part of the personal narrative on homeland. This is how the first category was linked to the notion of homeland.

The social and cultural attribute to homeland involved a relationship that included the self and other members of the same group. In this viewpoint, homeland was connected to personal and collective memory. Land, in the national struggle for

liberating Palestine, takes a central role into its social and cultural construction. Furthermore, the ancient and modern history of Palestine provided for a notion of homeland in Palestine that respondents identified with. Of particular significance is the history of dispersal of Palestinians as a result of occupation. The analysis identified those social and cultural issues as connected to the notion of homeland in Palestine.

Finally, I discussed the political dimension of homeland in Palestine. It was expressed to be a national homeland, a *Watan*, for Palestinians. This aspect involved the unresolved political issue of Israeli occupation. It involved the process of finding a political resolution in the two-state paradigm. The political homeland in Palestine was suggested to be resolved in the declaration of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The three categories – personal, social and cultural, and political – were all related to the notion of homeland in Palestine. The articulations on homeland by respondents demonstrated that the notion of Palestine needs to incorporate all three dimensions. They were all connected in the experience of PLO returnees.

From the analysis, I argued that the notion of homeland in Palestine is different from the notion of a Palestinian state. It does include the issue of statehood and the resolution to the conflict, yet it is not limited to the political view. The political homeland is only one dimension of the notion of homeland in Palestine. Furthermore, considering the three aspects of homeland together, they suggest that a political solution does not resolve the issue of homeland in Palestine. The evidence suggests a Palestinian construction of homeland that is the result of shared history, loss, and exile. It would

probably take time to resolve issues of loss and suffering. It would need new experiences to be incorporated in Palestinian memory.

Homeland in Palestine involves personal, social and cultural, and political constructions. Palestine is an ideal that has value. It is also constructed by the 'imagined Palestinian nation' to serve their national aspirations of independence. It is emotional and deeply connected to personal experience in ones homeland. It was also a product of past life in Palestine and the exilic experience.

PLO returnees expressed their particular notion of homeland in Palestine, which will be taken further in the next chapter on the 'experience of return.' In the following chapter I will include aspects of PLO returnees view on homeland and contrast it with their personal return experience and the issues they found upon return to their homeland.

Based on my experience and research, I would argue that Palestine is an ideal. The declaration of the Palestinian state and the end of present occupation will resolve part of the issue of Palestine. The vision by PLO returnees tells of a Palestine that is the state of all its citizens. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are not the only Palestines. I would argue that the greater vision of the ideal in the land of Palestine is that no one is denied their rights of living in Palestine not Jews, Christians, nor Muslims. All refugees who want to return will be able to return to anywhere in Palestine. There need be no ethnically- or religiously-centered state in that region. The homeland, the holy land to many, is for all. (Personal field notes – August 15, 2000).

Chapter Five

'Al-Awda' (Return) and 'Aideen' Returnees: Defining the Experience of Homeland

In the introduction of this thesis, I discussed the significance of the right of return to the Palestinians in exile. In this chapter I will describe in-depth the experience of the interviewed PLO returnees through a two-leveled analysis. First I will present and discuss Yasser's narrative on return as a basis for the analysis in this chapter. Second I will present other narratives to provide other experiences within the PLO returnees group. The two levels of analysis involve the significance of return to PLO returnees who were exiled. Their return also meant dealing with Israel's occupation and control of Palestinian territories. In this chapter I will argue for a disparity between the notion of a state and the reality experienced upon return in the occupied Palestinian territories.

5.1 Introducing Return

Before I begin presenting the data, I will refer to the main elements in the notion of return. The instance of return studied in this dissertation is the only official reckoning of numbers returning to the Palestinian territories. They ranged between 100,000-200,000 based on numbers provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Civil Affairs. The PLO return is the consequence of the political agreement made in Oslo in 1993. There were other groups who returned after the Gulf War in 1990, previous residents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and families who left to make a living and decided to return after Oslo.

Return was central to my informants' relationship to Palestine. To them, it was the experiential side of homeland, as opposed to experiencing it in exile. In investigating

the problems of social science research in Palestine, Tamari (1994) points to the need to study the transformation in Palestinian national identity from “yearning to ‘return to homeland’” as it becomes “less of an ideological construct and more of an issue of practical adjustment to a changed reality.”(82) I found value in the return experience as it brings the notion of return from exile back ‘home’. It also brings the notion of the state and homeland into question, the emergence of clashes between the different groups of Palestinians, and the experience of Palestine’s daily reality.

Return was an experience of mixed satisfaction and disappointment, which will be described in detail in this chapter. It is about the re-construction of identity. A conflict between class and nationalism emerged. Because of class differences, not all ‘returnees’ suffered equally in the return process. Extreme conflict can result in the original homeland where class is an element in this new reality. Those who have powerful positions, wealth and a network of connections make up the privileged class of returnees. Conflict arises when certain individuals are well-positioned financially, while others struggle to make a living. In addition, insiders had high expectations of returnees, and vice versa. Conflict rose between the insiders and outsiders because of these expectations and illusions about each other.

Challand (2000) explains that nevertheless this division between the Inside and the Outside is not strictly dichotomous. There are other dimensions to the divisions between class and nationalism emerging after the PLO return. These divisions emerge as a generational conflict between the Intifada generation and the older leadership and the younger generation in the refugee camps in the West Bank. They experience a more

difficult daily reality compared to renowned and wealthy families, for example in Al-Bireh/Ramallah.

First, neopatrimonial practices were not only limited to the returnees. Some insiders have also made use of their high position to receive more money and privileges. Similarly, some returnees have remained clear of dubious practices...there is a behavioral dimension in the clashes between the returnees and the inside. The cultural habits of the returnees 'displaying a background (rooted in their exile experience) that is more urban, secular, and alienated,' can be resented as provocative for the more rural and traditional population of West Bank, or for the majority of refugees living in Gaza (Challand 2000: 46-47).

In addition, return surfaces as a central element in the relationship to homeland from the point of view of Palestinian refugees (some of which were also among my informants). As indicated in the literature on Palestinian refugees, whether in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or around the world, return emerges as the most powerful symbol and signifier of the value of Palestine and of Palestinian-ness in the lives of refugees (Zureik 2002).

Return is an ideological construct that, when actualized, will end the refugees' physical exile. It is about the yearning to go back home, which is still not realized given the unresolved issue of the right of Palestinian refugees to return. Return was the dream maintained in exile, and it became the desire that kept that connection to Palestine. It was the igniter of longing and devotion to the Palestinian struggle. It was seen as the beginning of the resolution of the Palestinian dispossession and displacement. Without return, there can be no resolution to the Palestinian issue.

Return is a fundamental and problematic issue for both Palestinians and Israelis. Both sides re-appropriate ancient history to claim their right of return as the natives of the land. From the perspective of the Israeli state, it is a highly politicized concept. There

has been until this day no agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians about the return of Palestinian refugees. It is therefore worth posing the question what kind of return was made possible with Oslo (the PLO return)? Oslo offered a return limited in scale, the largest part of which is the limited and Israeli-controlled return of the PLO cadre.

Return has been a fundamental aspect of the creation, maintenance and expansion of the Israeli state. Israel maintains that any person of Jewish origin who wants to return to Israel has the right to do so and is granted Israeli citizenship. The right of Jewish return is elemental to the Israeli state, a state based on its majority Jewish population. The Israeli right of return is extended to the right to return to anywhere in Palestine and also a right to the land as well. The establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem exemplifies this.⁴⁷

Parallel to the Jewish right of return, is the Palestinian claim for the right to return. It can be formulated as equivalent to the Israeli right of return. Palestinians need to be there to make the same claim. This was part of the objective of the Oslo agreement. The idea was that when the leadership is in the Palestinian territories, it can negotiate on a more equal footing with the Israelis. However, this did not take place in the post-Oslo period. The issue of the right of return of Palestinians and Israelis is unequal; Jews can return while Palestinians cannot. Therefore, there is discrimination against Palestinian as they are denied access to their right to return.

This inequality with regards to the Palestinian right of return has its reasons. Israel has its perceptions that are based on political and religious beliefs. According to

⁴⁷ For a further discussion on the Israeli settlement activity in the Palestinian territories, B'tselem, an Israeli human rights organization published a 100 page report, "Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank (www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/Land_Grab_2002.asp).

Israel, returnees are a demographic matter. The Palestinian demography needs to be balanced for the sake of demographic dominance of the Jews in the region. Since Israel needs to be a majority Jewish state, the return of Palestinians will jeopardize its demography and existence. This is based on the lack of information and initially fear on the part of the Israelis that the return of Palestinians means the eviction of Israelis. Secondly, if Palestinian refugees are allowed to return, that will translate into Israel taking responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and the displacement of the Palestinian population as a result of the creation of Israel in 1948, and the 1967 war. Thirdly, there is the issue of the possibility of co-existence with the Palestinian returnees if they are allowed to return to their original homes⁴⁸.

5.2 Analysis of Interviews

I begin the analysis of the experience of return using Yasser's narrative as a basis for the analysis in this chapter. In his narrative there are the main elements that will be used for analyzing other narratives. These major elements involved the notion of homeland in Palestine and the significance of return in Palestinian's lives, living under occupation, dealing with the monopolization of power, corruption, and neopatrimonial practices within the PNA. I have also selected narratives of other informants as sources of further information. They will be used for a further discussion of the different dimensions to the return experience. Using these narratives I will show the range of experiences of different individuals.

For this dissertation, I will focus on the narratives of experiences of return to demonstrate how each person expresses a unique experience. Though there were

⁴⁸ What is meant by 'return to original homes' is the return of refugees to the places they resided in prior to their exile. This means they should be allowed to return to Israel.

common features to the return experience, informants' narratives represent the range within the one common experience, and show how one's return can be seen in the context of each individual's history, memory, personal feelings and ideals.

The different personal experiences of return can be classified on a scale beginning with discontent and disappointment. The other end of the scale expresses more acceptance, happiness and adaptation. The majority of my informants expressed an overwhelming feeling of discontent and disappointment with what they found upon their return. However, they were happy they actually returned, and did not see another alternative. To many, their struggle has come back home, where they now have to struggle for a democratic governing body and to end the occupation of their land. Informants also expressed a mixture of emotions regarding their disappointment with the change in the place they once knew, with the people they once lived with, with their present political authority, and with the social life and adjusting to living with other Palestinians. I will present in the following section quotes that will express their experiences and the mixture of feelings, ideas, and questions.

Coming home is an uneasy process since the PLO returnees' identities were formed in exile. Just as there are dominant forms of belonging, there are also new forms of affiliation emerging as returnees actively construct their absorption in the homeland. Return brought the 'returnees' other questions about their identity, and issues emerged out of the lived experience of the new reality. The issue of identity was challenged in exile. What does it mean to be Palestinian after return in the context of post-Oslo and Israeli occupation?

5.2.1 Yasser's Return Narrative

Yasser is a political leader in the PLO (*Fateh*), in his 60s. He is critical of the Oslo Agreement. He talks about his experience of return in a way that incorporates the many dimensions of return described by other informants. His narrative was representative of those who are critical of the Oslo agreement but also saw in their return a way to assert their Palestinian national rights. According to him, it is better to fight for the rights of other Palestinians from within the homeland. He describes his return as a positive experience, though he is critical of some of the misuse of power within the PNA and of Israeli practices. His view is future-oriented, projecting a solution to the homeland in Palestine and asserting the right and the need for every Palestinian refugee to return.

Not all *Fateh* accepted Oslo. I was not completely in agreement but had some conditions, that the minority has the right to express its views and be respected. I looked at the contradictions of Oslo and how it can be read in a Palestinian way. Oslo had its negatives and positives. My conviction was that Israelis do not abide by agreements. One of the things that attracted me to Oslo was Israeli acceptance of bringing back the *Fateh* cadre. Only the fighters holding Jordanian and Egyptian passports can go back. Therefore, the 'Naziheen'⁴⁹ in most cases and not the refugees... They did not want people from Lebanon or Syria but we did not accept that and forced them to accept anyone we want, to the extent that the non-Palestinians, who were fighting with us could also be accepted. What also encouraged me is the entrance of the PLO political cadre to work from the inside. They did not want that. I am willing to work on any additions to the agreement, though I have my own reservation about the original agreement. My position was to develop the agreement. When I took this responsibility, I had to decide on 500 names to come. Arafat said even those against Oslo can submit. The right of return, as agreed with Abu Amar, is the right of every Palestinian. This was the introduction to the notion of the right of return. This was a way to enrich Oslo in a Palestinian way.

Fighting is not always with weapons or stones. Every Palestinian that returns and sets foot in every piece of land liberates it, even if it is in the middle of settlements, because the place feels this coexistence with

⁴⁹ *Naziheen* means displaced. It is reference to those Palestinians who were displaced within the state of Israel, leaving their towns or cities of origin to others within Israeli territory.

Palestinian rights... This is how we felt. Therefore, we opened the file of national numbers and people started to come back with permits.

The moment of return was like this: I did not kiss the land⁵⁰; this is not what it is about. I had a feeling that this land is for us. I felt I was going to a battle. At the bridge, they asked me if I have weapons, I said yes and pulled out my pen and then they were silent... Everyone should have a role (referring to each Palestinian) as long as it is all complementary, and I believe that this complementarity changes partial return to complete return. It is not like 'those who returned, good and those who did not, they lost the chance, No'. What is more important than liberating the land and sacred places is the human being who is glorified by God as his creation and everything is of service to him? Therefore, the return of the human being is the most important Palestinian accomplishment.

The moment of return was great, especially because I returned through Gaza and it means a lot to me, for example like the critical conditions of 1971. It is not more sacred than Jerusalem, but in terms of the struggle, it was stronger there than anywhere.

Return was a 'return of the self.' I stayed one year in Gaza. I did not go to the West Bank. I was against entering unliberated areas, and did not want to cross Erez. The first return was through Rafah. I wrote a poem: 'But it is My Homeland'. If homeland is ruined, it is still homeland, even if it's poor, occupied or rich... Without a homeland, I have no value. So if I stayed out, I have no home. This was the key to my return.

I have slogans that have to do with optimism: 'It has to work', 'Tomorrow is better.' I am going to make juice out of rotten fish. Rotten fish is Oslo and the juice is return and happiness...

The human being has to feel exile. The time spent just working towards return...It should be the way to return. I never felt I was exiled, but always that I was preparing for return. Even the moments of working for return are beautiful. I created in it a life, got married and had children. Anyone who is born outside in Canada, or elsewhere will say 'I am Palestinian', even if they took other passports. Therefore, the right of return is important. We were born on the basis of that right of return, young and old. Exile is the time separating you from your homeland.

There are two kinds of return; one is preparing to return as a setting for struggle, and the other is personal...Return, to me, is a 'return of struggle'...I did not go back (referring to his city of origin) because it is still occupied. I still have not gone to the place where I was born and I do

⁵⁰ Many returning Palestinians kiss the land when they enter the borders, a symbolic gesture of saluting and connecting with their homeland.

not want to go. It does cross my mind. People ask me why? I say, 'Did you go?' and they say yes, so I ask them how they feel 'I left with a knot in my stomach, feeling bad. I am delaying the ache for later.

I have a feeling that we need to reach a moment of truth where there is no Zionist entity, but Israeli Jewish entity, meaning that people living in it, human beings who believe in other people as equal, not the with the mentality of the 'chosen people' and the others as servants. In that moment we can create a democratic society...This exists in Israel now: new historians, Peace now. You see demonstrations of groups of Israelis that are not Zionists because Zionism is a type of isolationist racism that does harm to Jews. To me, the Zionist project is not a Jewish project but imperialist, created to use the Jews and their historical relation with Palestine to maintain divisions, underdevelopment, and dependency in Palestine.

The journey of return is accomplishing its objectives, but it is not complete without the return or the feeling of the right of every Palestinian human being, wherever, to return. In that moment, I would return but now I did not return because my brother did not. For example I cannot get him a national number.

I am coming to work for open borders between Jordan and Palestine, and Rafah⁵¹ and Palestine, when we do not need Israeli permission to pass. This is part of the return in the current process. I do not consider going to the West Bank and Gaza as the right of return.

My return will be complete tomorrow, regardless if return to all of Palestine is permitted. It is considered Arab land and must be one country, etc. This must be left to history because the power balance now does not allow this. But I know there is a state called Israel and a state called Palestine and every refugee has the right to return.

If my return is allowed tomorrow, I will register my name to go back to Beit Dajan. Our house, someone else is living in it. This house I should take. I have the right to be Israeli. I want to have Israeli citizenship. If it is not allowed for an Israeli to be *Fateh*, I will make another party but I want to go back to Palestine and take this nationality and it must be understood that if an Australian Jew can take an American citizenship and an Israeli citizenship, I must also; and Palestinians of Galilee have the right to have dual citizenship. This will create in the future a democratic Palestine.

⁵¹ Rafah is a town in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. The Egyptian border with Gaza is called Rafah crossing point.

Before there was no homeland, and still this is not homeland, but the reality we live in is one a lot of people live – the entire Arab homeland is divided. What separates us from Jordan, a river, and Syria and Lebanon? They were one country, now they are two. Occupation separated Gaza and West Bank. The security passage⁵² is something temporary. All procedures in the peace negotiations will only create temporary stability and not peace. Peace will only be there when any Jewish, Muslim or Christian has the right to live anywhere in Palestine, one democratic county, no Zionism, no extremism/racism. In my opinion, this is the only way. This may take 1-2 generations but there should be visionaries to say this is the right way. And we should not deceive ourselves because from war to war who knows what will happen. *Watan* has to be secular. Religion is for God, no space for extremism on either side. If it is not secular it will not work because the struggle between ideologies is a problem. All world wars are religious. But there is space on earth for all to live.

The source of people's discontent is aspirations, hopes that were wrongly assessed. They came back thinking that Oslo was different from the results they expected. They were disappointed. There will be no peace. I tell you this and I came. People here were shocked by those coming back and the violations. And this ruined return for a lot of people. Still this is normal, because there is good and bad inside and outside. Good people have not found each other yet but the bad have.

Here is the center of the world: Jerusalem, New Bethlehem, beliefs, and ideologies that human beings have. God's facility on earth is in Jerusalem. Even Jesus Christ went to heavens from Jerusalem... 95% of people have faith. This land that we are clinging to has old history (religious, prophets) and modern history (colonial). Therefore, this land is called Palestine.

When Jews talk about return: what return? Jewish?!! I do not want to bring Russians here and say you are Palestinian. But they are, so they deny us our return. So it is not a story about Jews but they are victims to Zionism.

Now they say there is no *Watan*. But *Watan* is available. It is enough for 6-7 million Palestinians to live here, and twice that number. But if an Israeli uses 10 times more water than a Palestinian, they have pools, etc., they create this problem so that Palestinians are not allowed to return.

So long as there is someone who feels injustice and did not come back, they have the right to make a revolution and a new PLO. Therefore, we

⁵² The security passage is the passage, or pathway specifically for the transportation of Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

told them we will not talk about the numbers of refugees to return, whether a few thousands or a million refugees want to come back. There should be the right of return and whoever does not want it, it is his right. Maybe a lot do not want to become Israeli but I say I want to.

There could be confrontations happening in the future, a few bullets here and there. But neither the Israelis nor us will have a military resolution. They have nuclear weapons to destroy humanity but cannot defeat individuals (September 24, 2000 – Ramallah).

Yasser's narrative suggests some of the main elements in the overall experience of return. It contextualized the return of the PLO within the question of the return of Palestinian refugees. It also suggests that the return of the PLO cadre was not a resolution of the issue of return. However, it transported the struggle of the PLO and the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian political questions to the homeland, where they will be fought.

It also suggests that not all those who returned supported and accepted the Oslo agreement and all that it entails. Their critique of the Oslo Accord did not hinder their intention and their will to return. Oslo was to be developed while the PLO was still negotiating in the Interim period, a view I heard repeatedly by different informants.

Yasser's portrayal also describes a relationship with a homeland that recognizes Palestinian rights to exist there. He talks about the sense of coexistence between the Palestinian presence and the land. His narrative also deals with the right of ownership and right to reclaim the Palestinian homeland.

The moment of return was a very important one as it was the 'return to the self'. This expression which was dealt with in the connection between one's being and homeland, was shown in Yasser's case to extend to the experience of return. Return to homeland was the experience of returning to one's self. In the first place, to exist without

a homeland means to exist without a value, and therefore return was to come back to oneself.

Yasser also suggests that to view return as an end by itself was not his experience. His return was a 'return to struggle.' This is an important element in the return of the PLO; their political struggle did not end when they returned. It was taken further to struggle and build from within the homeland.

As to the return to visit one's house, Yasser was not able to come to terms with the fact that another family occupied his house now. He is willing to become an Israeli citizen to be able to return and live in his hometown. Though many other informants did not share this view, it serves to show that Mandate Palestine is viewed as homeland, and Palestinians then have the right to be there. Return then is not only a return to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

There is an inconsistency in Yasser's account about what he returned to. In one instance he notes that there is no homeland even after return, by which he means that what he returned to was not the 'real' homeland. In another part, he says 'now they say there is no *Watan*, but *Watan* is available.' A closer reading into this discloses a confused state regarding how homeland is being perceived and re-constructed. This dilemma was also apparent in the presentation of Chapter 4 in the section on 'Constructing the Homeland of Palestine.' Furthermore, it shows that there is a difference between the cultural homeland, *El-Bilad* and *Watan*, the political homeland. According to Yasser, *Watan* exists but homeland does not. Therefore, the political homeland is being formed, but the personal and cultural homeland have been subjected to trauma, division, and a change in the cultural landscape, to use Mitchell's term (1999).

Yasser also expresses his vision for the future. He believes only in the one-state solution for Palestine, where there will be no Zionist entity and no state based on ethnicity or religion. Though the majority of informants have not expressed this view, this does not correspond to the framework of Oslo and the agreements following that. This view is interesting for this thesis. It offers a solution to the personal and cultural homeland in Palestine that the two-state framework does not. It is also in accord with the discrepancy between the notion of homeland and the notion of the state.

Finally, the discrepancy between the idea of the state and the Palestinian effort to have a state are challenged by the existing political and social reality in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Yasser describes how people had certain miscalculated aspirations of what they would return to. There was a misconception about achieving peace. There was also the disappointment with the violations by the PNA. In addition, there was the clash between the insiders and the outsiders.

5.2.2 'Al-Awda' - Narratives of Return

Ghassan Zaktan, a poet and writer, returning to his homeland in his 40s, described his plan to return in his narrative. His was a story of having to let go of all he had made in exile. When in homeland, another version of his story begins, as he tries to build something, a scene, or a place in memory, from which he feels estranged. His story tells of his return as a part of a grander project in which his life is a detail in the bigger scene of return.

The whole topic of return was totally a product of others' making, a complete interference of elements that I had not given to anyone, a line of profound pain that I could not avoid, something close to the ultimate loss, a feeling that could not be justified, understood, or ignored.

Al-Awda (return) was like a project that was known, and an agreement was made for its organization, and talked about. You withdraw completely while the exile is emphasized in this sudden way that lacks organization. There is a collapse and losses in the shadow. The things I have are few, and anxious, and not enough: a clouded story with white and black...Basic belongings that do not serve their purpose and are not enough to build on...Our lives was filled with *Al-Awda*. It was not my original idea. It was the collective result of a fear that started early on before the Nakba in 1948, an exile that accumulated in Palestinian conversations, in their resistance, and in their death. The heroism that was told and the poetry that they wrote were telling of the coming exile. The concealed exile that accumulates and comes close to completion whenever a Kipa arrives at Jaffa, or a kibbutz is established, or some committee comes to study the situation...the exile that was complete in 1948.

The idea of *al-Awda* emerged long before that, while Palestinians were rushing in painful queues towards their exiles. They had accomplished building their 'longing' to this country (*Al-Bilad*) and organized the dream of 'their return' that continued to form along their side, like a mysterious entity, independent, in time, place, and direction. And like a well-made literary trick, homeland (*Al-Watan*) settled behind their backs in a quiet and silent description...Something of doomsday, and something of paradise; this is the equation of return and homeland (*Al-Watan*).

I am the son of this lineage...and like others, I added to the scene details that have to do with me...But I did not act to describe it as a reality or possibility. I had arranged myself in somewhat a different way, and return (*Al-Awda*) was not my personal plan. It was for me closer to a collective ownership, a public park, and a royal land...mountains that no one owns...a public story that one can add on to. It is closer to a painful block of time, and movement, and places, and destinies, and heroism, and knowing, and a group decision, and the country (*Al-Bilad*) that becomes yours the moment you think of it.

Suddenly the issue becomes completely different and aggressive, everything that was past was 'exile', and that was temporary and sudden. All of this: the faces, the hands, the houses, the laughter in other people's rooms, the writing, and sleeping...pictures too, dialects that we mastered, and the children we played with...!! Something like a door knock in the morning to know that you are not 'here', and you are not you, while you are approaching your 40s!! Or to see yourself in a military plane, alone, separated, and 'returning' too, and you have nothing to lean on, or to build and to go back to change...then you are sure that this is not a dream...(Zaktan, 1997:141-142).

While working with the PLO all her life, Nabila, a woman in her fifties, came back with dreams that she had kept while in exile. She saw a positive consequence of the Oslo process. As Yasser also indicated, it had brought the struggle home. “The prominent thing about Oslo is that it allowed much of the PLO to return, the return of the Palestinian national establishment, the Palestinian liberation movement, who would have dreamt that Arafat would be here?” The main achievement of Oslo was that it brought the national liberation movement back to the Palestinian territories. It had been a dream of the PLO leadership to return, and start the return process for other Palestinians. Part of that dream was creating a Palestinian state.

Even when experiencing disillusionment after return, it was still viewed as a mainly positive and crucial event. Rami, a journalist in his 40s, expressed the importance of return to him as the connection between his past and future. Living as a refugee in exile meant accumulating more suffering. Though he came back to a different Palestine from what he knew before, he found home finally in Ramallah. His major difficulties were with the changes he saw in the landscape and the people he once knew. I have included an extended quote from our discussion about his return experience.

Return is going back to the origin, to the past and the future. My return is my future. Therefore, it is bigger than going home. It belongs to the future and to the past. After exile, return became a holding on to the past and the future at the same time. Without this return my past is detached from me and my future is unclear.

As an exile, I had no future. I was expelled from the place. I did not have a future and the ability to build it and hold on to it. I am on the margins of things.

Return is a place for me, a place I can build my home on and my future. I left when I was 19 years old and went back after 25 years. I lived in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Cypress, and Iraq but never settled in one place. I had a Jordanian passport but was not allowed to renew it because

of PLO membership. The passport was a constant distress. The travel document was a big problem. This continued until the 90s. After 1993 they (the Jordanian government⁵³) gave me a two-year passport. Now I have a Palestinian passport. In general, it is accepted. It is easier to travel to Europe and the U.S. but in Arab countries it is more difficult.

Palestine is very different from what I had in mind. In exile one builds homeland based on what one wants. It is different from reality. You have to give it a beautiful picture. After 25 years of being away, occupation changed the place. For example, in the West Bank, I used to take roads as a child but I cannot now because of the settlements. The routes from city to city have changed. We used to pass by villages, now we do not. We pass outside of the villages. There are Israeli security positions so now I cannot enter.

The consumption of Israeli society: coca cola, Pepsi, and plastic damaged the whole scene I knew, from the clear and pure I knew. So the place became something else. A drastic change, a bitter feeling, you lose the places of your origin. Time also plays a role. *Watan* is the people. I came back to my village; my school friends and neighbors all became different people. So they are no more my friends. I changed a lot too. I wished they remained the way I had them in my mind. Exile was like a knife between me and the people I knew. That was the most painful part of return.

In the beginning there was no house and no jobs. I could not travel from place to place. I had thought of returning to exile in Jordan, very stressful thoughts, but not deep ones, slowly it changed to more adaptation. I came to a place that is tired and I was tired of exile, so it needed time. It took me two years as a journalist for people to know me. I feel it is my homeland. Now I feel when I go back to Ramallah, I am coming home. I feel that I became again from here, reconnecting the roots with all the suffering and pain...we came back to a destroyed country. It is not easy to find myself and find my place.

Return did not change my homeland but the notion of homeland is always changing. Every ten years it changes inside of me, and my relation to the world changes. The place is still here (March 2, 2000 – Ramallah).

Return for Mohammed, who lived most of his in exile, after leaving in 1948 as a nine-year old, was the epiphany of his struggle. His experience was a combination of content and discontent; happiness because he returned, and sadness to find Palestine as it

⁵³ Author's clarification.

was. Return was “with mixed emotions, absolute happiness and sadness. In struggling, I got my right to return. The dream of return was accomplished. I was able to come back to this land that I have missed a lot and was connected to...It was wonderful. I took what I lost, my identity. I still have to leave every 3 months but it is not important. I feel I am in my country. I will never be told that this is not my country. I do not need to have an ID here.”

As I spoke more with Mohammed about return and its meaning to him, he said in defining return, “First there is the ability for real return, and second there is the will to return. To follow the events of *Al-Watan* and be engaged in it, is also a return to it. It is not necessarily a physical return, but, for example, investment is a type of return.” When I asked about the difference between return to the West Bank and return to the Gaza Strip he said he believed that there is no difference in returning to the West Bank or Gaza, and that it is enough to return to a place where you can experience your return, regardless of where it is in homeland.

Though return is filled with difficulty, as people had to deal with the economic, social, and political circumstances in the Palestinian territories, return was a great achievement. It ended the movement characteristic of living in exile. It did not end all the suffering, but it offered a sense of stability and a home. Nabila, a woman in her fifties, who returned after a long exile, said that “part of the goal is accomplished by our return, regardless of all conditions of suffering inside and wrong doings that we hope get fixed. When we fix our inner house, then there will be strength to face occupation...to say what is wrong, say the truth, and solve our people’s problems as much as possible.” When I asked her about being happy upon return, she said,

Am I happy in terms of what happiness is? NO, but I have a relative feeling of stability. I stopped thinking of migration. The feeling of movement always followed us, the feeling that you need to leave your house after one year because the owner wants it, decreased. I sold my house in Damascus and built one here. This is my home. No more leaving September 18, 2000 – Gaza City).

In speaking about the return of Palestinians in the diaspora, Nabila points that:

Still those outside feel they want to come back, even with all the suffering inside. Love for homeland and belonging to it is satisfied when you come back regardless of all other suffering and feeling foreign amongst family. Still you resist in your own homeland on a strong footing and ignore those people who are supposed to be your family (September 18, 2000 – Gaza City).

The return process was viewed as being positive and negative. The fact that Palestinian returnees can now work from within the homeland was the main achievement. The negative dimension was seen as a form of resistance to destructive forces within Palestinian society and with Israel's occupation.

Return for some was with the objective of normalizing life in the new reality in the Palestinian homeland. Even though the homeland has been occupied, deformed, and lost. Hasan Khadr in 'Were You There?' (1997) wants to normalize life in his homeland. He believes that since the Palestinian identity is still being shaped, return can be a way to build homeland with what one has, and create out of the destruction a homeland that expresses this identity. He represents those who are disappointed but are working to normalize their life in their changed homeland.

There is no possibility of reproducing the homeland as a paradise lost. The homeland is at hand, disfigured and distorted and waiting for salvation. We have an identity that is still in the formation stage. This identity will become larger with every meter we are able to extract from the occupier, with every road we construct, every book we print, every woman we free, every window we open in our life, which is so burdened with stagnant air, and every decision we take in the fields of social and political organization and human rights. (124)

Mohammed and Zaktan expressed more feelings of disillusionment upon return. I believe that this view is not representative of returnees. I have included pieces of their writings to demonstrate the source of their discontent. Zakariya Mohammed, a writer and journalist talked about the kind of homeland he returned to. In his description is the ideal homeland he maintained in exile. When he returned he discovered that his ideal changed into bearing the pain of loss. In 'Bond and Gold' (1997) he wrote,

I thought I would double my idols and mirrors in the homeland. What is this homeland? It is no more than a piece of land that is left for us. It is a piece of stone. It is a land of mountains and hills...a land of stone and rock. They took the coast and left rocky hills for us. No, in fact, they did not leave it: we try to make them leave it. What can we do with stone? We can at least bear our agony. (137)

Ghassan Zaktan, whom I introduced a piece of his writing, from 'The Banishment of Exile', expresses also another disappointment in his return to his homeland. He writes about his return to his village, Zakariya, which is now Kfar Zakariyya. He evokes his memory of it as it was told by his family:

Zakariya did not look as it was described at all. The hill was not astonishing as in the description, and the Jews who were wandering along the roads did not relate to the place; rather, there was a distance separating them from it...the body movement...shoulders in particular. It seemed to me that they were totally removed from what was happening...

I did not abandon it. I have no right to do that. I have no right to abandon it. This is a knowledge that is more sublime than the vehicle of yearning that brought me here, or rather the exile that brought me to my father's place. Forgetting or forgiving is his decision, and he did not do that. I do not have the permission to forget, or forgive, but I am his carrier and his extension of living. There is no one left with the right to forget, it was him only, and he died, and I have only to carry the blessings of remembering and its pain forever (145).

The experience of return, as observed from the previous discussion, was a personal event. It also took place within a social and political context, which will be

dealt with in the following section. In general, it was a dream come true. However, the dream of Ghassan Zaktan upon return struck another reality. That reality exposed a mixture of difficulty and happiness. It also transported the struggle from exile back to the homeland. The questions emerging after return touch upon the notion of homeland and the new reality, issues of loss, forgetting and forgiving, and the need to normalize life. These are some of the aspects of the personal experience of return. As demonstrated by my informants, their experience of return was a reflection of their own state, and what they have made peace with. It is also a reflection of their process of human experience and change.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the notion of return and its centrality in Palestinian diaspora discourse. I presented Yasser's narrative as a base for the return narrative. Following that I presented other narratives of return that defined the experience of homeland.

The return of the PLO returnees was experienced on different levels: the personal, the social and the political. The personal journey of return revealed that it is experienced differently by respondents. It was in general a positive and important experience because of the centrality of the return theme in the Palestinian discourse. There were however disillusionments about returning to a changed homeland, and also a homeland that is still occupied.

In the following chapter, I will elaborate on the issues and experience of homeland in Palestine using fieldwork observations and discourses of everyday life. The objective is to show how return to homeland was confronted with the daily reality of

dealing with different political, economic, and social issues: Israeli occupation, the PNA, and social conditions interactions.

Chapter Six

Living in Ramallah and Gaza City – Notes from the Field and Discourses of Everyday life

In this chapter, I will present observations gathered in the field while living in Ramallah city and Gaza City. I will also draw on the narrations of interviewees and discuss the political and social issues in everyday life in Ramallah and Gaza City. I will use the information provided by informants to discuss the daily life of PLO returnees, and the benefits and disadvantages of return. My observations and the experience of everyday life of informants are focused on issues in the order of their priority as reported by informants: Israeli occupation, the PNA, and social conditions and interactions.

My observations are based on interacting with people during my fieldwork. I discuss their issues and some of their experiences of the two cities. As seen in the previous chapter, the idea of a state, in contrast to what the PLO returnees came back to, was the subject of many discussions with my informants.

I traveled throughout the two cities, visiting the different places, stopping in cafes, restaurants, Internet cafes, resorts and visiting people in their homes. Since the Israeli border 'Erez' divides the West Bank and Gaza Strip, I experienced the border crossing that informants had talked about. I will discuss my observations of this particular experience.

My fieldwork observations and narratives of return were confronted with everyday life. I address the Israeli occupation and its consequences on daily life, the role of the PNA and the leadership as an authority, and finally social life focusing on the nature of socializing and interacting in the two cities. This third ethnographic chapter will

provide an added understanding of the arguments of this thesis. The experience of being there gave me the opportunity of living the daily reality of Palestinians. Using my observations with the other ethnographic studies, I will present the difficulty of imagining how the Palestinian state will come into shape while Israel exercises its occupation, and what kind of state and leadership will exist in Palestine. This chapter will also show how the return experience is multi-dimensional and complex. Return requires adjustment to a new social setting. It involves a migration to a new place and interacting with others who have had different experiences.

6.1 Israeli Occupation

6.1.1 Political situation

This fieldwork was conducted before the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began in September 2000. As I experienced living in Ramallah and visiting Gaza City frequently, I observed an atmosphere of tension, stress, desperation, contempt towards the Israeli occupation, and frustration with the peace process initiated with Oslo. There was much evidence of that tension, some clear and some subtle. I talked to insiders and outsiders, both expressed concerns and fear of what will happen in the future. After the failure to reach an agreement at the Camp David Summit, there was much discussion about the end of the peace process.

Declaring a state was a strategic choice to the notion of peace. Insiders and returnees, throughout the seven years since Oslo began to question the peace initiative. The importance of having a state has been repeatedly expressed, but it is not the most important issue. The right of return of refugees was more important. However, since peace was not achieved, it brought into question the supposedly ended state of occupation

and the possibility of a viable Palestinian state on 1967 land. This increased discontent with the Oslo agreement and with the Palestinian concessions. Oslo would have problems on the ground that could have not been predicted. The phrase I heard over and over was 'We are still occupied'. Both PLO returnees and insiders repeated this. Someone living outside of Palestine and listening to news about the peace initiative would not know how different was the actual lived experience, or about the different ways Israel controls the area.

In a 'real' sense, Israel has control over the Palestinian homeland. Though the West Bank and Gaza Strip are Palestinian territories, Israel controls all entry and exit points. There are checkpoints throughout areas B and C of the West Bank and the borders controlling entry into the Gaza Strip. Since March 2002, with the military incursion in area A and B, there has been a considerable increase in the number of checkpoints (See Map 14 and 15). The most interesting thing about these borders and checkpoints is what they symbolize for the Palestinians. Oslo promised the 1967 borders to be the borders of the future Palestinian state. But until now, the issue of borders of the future Palestinian state is unclear. In practice, Israel views those borders as amorphous and changeable.

Then there is also the geographic separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In a state, this separation has to be eliminated, or a solution found to link both areas. Borders in Palestine are political statements. They not only claim the space but the place and landscape of Palestine.

There are six main borders of crossing: an internal border called Erez (between the Gaza Strip and Israel), Allenby Bridge and Sheik Hussein Bridge (between Jordan

and Israel), Rafah border (between Egypt and the Gaza Strip), and Gaza International Airport. All of them are under Israeli control. Though there are PNA officers at Erez, Gaza International airport, and the borders with Jordan, Israeli officers give the final decision. A Palestinian needs a permit to leave Gaza and a permit to enter Gaza. It is easier for West Bankers to go to the Gaza Strip but not vice versa. For a Palestinian to cross between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or to travel to other parts of Israel, he or she has to follow a process. This begins with submitting a request that is, in most cases denied, or when accepted, is a temporary and restricted travel permission. Other Palestinians coming from Jordan, Egypt, or anywhere else, need an Israeli clearance, a visa or a foreign passport (Zureik 2001). Borders, passports, and permits to cross become a natural part of living in the Palestinian territories. In this equation, the conflict over the place is ever-present in the daily experiences of crossing. The place is not one's own and is under the control of others. Borders are the ultimate example of authority, of denial, of experiencing the opposite of home, of being treated as lesser than human and under suspicion.

I found from personal experience that the Erez border crossing to be the most inhuman and humiliating experience of crossing. Workers from the Gaza Strip and other Palestinians were subjected to insults, questioning, and waiting for extended periods of time such as when the computer system was down. Soldiers and officers, especially teenagers are aggressive and would exercise their power to act in a way that shows they have the ultimate control. Different people I met also reported the same experience to me. As all the other borders, Erez had two entry points. The first is for the Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the other for foreigners and VIPs. The first

time I arrived to the Gaza Strip, the taxi dropped me at the Palestinian entry. It was a long tunnel with wires surrounding it. As I approached the officer on duty, she looked at my Canadian passport. She said, angrily, "You are not supposed to be here," and called in another officer. He informed me that I should enter from the VIP section. I asked him why I could not enter from the Palestinian point. He insisted that I could not. The first striking feature that caught my eye, since I have never seen borders like this one, was the reclining metal doors. It looked like a cattle farm. I saw the Palestinian workers coming back from work in Israel passing through and sliding a magnetic card that the officer in charge checks on the computer. I was taken to the VIP entry, which I felt guilty about, but since it was my first time I was not sure what to do. The contrast between the Palestinian entry and the VIP entry was great. I entered an air-conditioned place, with three officers sitting behind a counter. There were three areas, one for foreigners, one for NGOs, and one for diplomats. I was questioned as to the reason of my visit. I then walked a distance in open air to another officer who checked my passport.

I learned much about borders in my nine-months stay in Palestine. I would cross the Erez border many times. The treatment I received even as a VIP was suspicious, arrogant and rude. I had a number of confrontations with Israeli officers, most of whom were in their teens. Once I was asked, 'Why are you going to Gaza? There is nothing there to see.' I responded angrily saying that it was none of anyone's business why I wanted to go to Gaza. I was often intimidated to the point of outright anger.

The other interesting fact I learned was the differential treatment certain members of the PNA received at the borders. Because of the need to travel back and forth between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, they were given VIP cards by Israel, which would

spare them passing through the entry for other Palestinians. The VIP card is like a foreign passport. It allows selected PNA members to pass through the foreigners' area at the borders. At every Israeli crossing point, whether coming from Jordan, or Egypt or at Erez, there is a passage for the Palestinians (those holding Palestinians passports, or Jordanians with a two-year passports⁵⁴) and another passage for foreigners (PNA members holding VIP card, international organizations, and holders of foreign passports with Israeli visas). In the Palestinian crossing area there are Palestinian authority officials, and sitting behind them are Israeli officers checking and giving the final word on who is allowed to enter. People using the crossing point from Jordan into the West Bank reported this to me. As a Canadian crossing, I was not permitted to pass by the Palestinians crossing point from Jordan. At the Allenby Bridge Crossing (Jordan-Jericho-Israel borders), there were also two sections, one for foreigners and one for Palestinians.

From the Gaza Strip, there is a Palestinian authority checkpoint after you cross the Israeli one, but there is no mixing of Palestinians and Israeli personnel. I did not observe the Rafah borders, but was told that it is the same as the Jordanian ones, alas the worst in terms of treatment compared to other borders.

The Israelis control the airport in Gaza City. All passengers need to be cleared individually and then all exit as one group. Everyone has to wait for all the travelers to clear for security reasons. The Israelis also control the whole process and if they suspect someone they have the right to stop him or her. Harassment at the borders, whether coming from Jordan, or from Egypt, or coming into the Gaza Strip varies in degrees, and depends on your documents, the mood of the officers on duty and if the computer is

⁵⁴ The two-year passports are issued to those who had left after the 1967 war and came to Jordan.

working or not. When the system is down, no Palestinian is allowed to cross, as I have heard several times.

Borders are symbolic. What happens at the borders to Palestinians reflects what is happening in the conflict. This is because the borders and the barbed wires separating the Gaza Strip from Israel are a place of humiliation for Palestinians. Iman, a woman in her 60s working in the security apparatus in Gaza City, feels her return negatively at the borders. According to Iman, the experience of crossing the border makes one question the return decision itself in the context of occupation. "A small boy controls my entry. There is difficulty at the borders and I need to rise above what is humiliating and turn it around to make it work for me" (July 17, 2000 – Gaza City).

The experiences at the borders were mentioned repeatedly by my informants. Salim elaborated on the difficulty of crossing borders and the feeling of humiliation when dealing with Israeli officers. His experience at the border was heightened by the need to accept the procedures in order to cross. The suspicious treatment at the different borders and crossings, more often with men than woman, suggests the symbolic character of borders. They become the place where the conflict and the occupier are experienced directly.

At Tel Aviv airport I feel targeted. I leave with a Palestinian passport but I have to get a permit to enter the airport – special procedures – you have to get a security check. They take everyone alone and ask questions and then they compare the answers with the person traveling with you...When going to Gaza and dealing with the Israelis, sometimes I feel like throwing up. Even those that are sympathetic, I still feel humiliated at Erez and the crossings. They make you feel second-class. When coming from Jordan on the bus they open everything, check under the bus with large mirrors. The first four chairs no one is allowed to sit in, like they are dealing with terrorists and this does not make sense. Where were you? Who is with you? I do not feel that we deal with each other as equals even on the most basic level. Therefore there is fear of this kind of peace and we are paying the price (July 22, 2002 – Ramallah).

Furthermore, car plates are a noticeable feature distinguishing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from the rest of Israel. Israeli cars are yellow-plated, and therefore very visible from a distance. Palestinians living in Jerusalem or the area called Greater Jerusalem have yellow-plated cars, as do Palestinians living in Israel (Palestinian Israelis or Arab Israelis). Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have white-plated cars, with green printing. White-plated cars cannot cross in Israeli territories unless the driver has a permit for the car and for him/herself. It is extremely rare to find a white-plated car in Israel. An Israeli would not drive into the Palestinian territories with yellow plated car for security reasons.

6.1.2 Economic Situation

The economic situation observed during fieldwork was another factor in the discontent. The economic situation was affected by Israeli interference. Work opportunities were affected since there is an economic dependency on Israeli products. The movement of goods in and out of the Palestinian territories was dependent on the Israeli authority. Some of my informants spoke in detail about, about how Israeli officials have the authority to stop a shipment from passing and keeping it at Erez for a few days or weeks.

Palestinians workers in Israel have the experience of the relationship of a slave to his master. The opportunities for work in Israel have been the main source of income for West Bankers and more so for Gaza workers. Whenever there is political unrest, those workers are the ones that suffer the most. They are not permitted to enter, or the number of workers allowed into Israel is reduced. Israel controls their work opportunities, as there are limited opportunities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for labor.

Israel also controls water and electricity consumption in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. During my first days in Gaza City, which happened to be in the month of Ramadan, the electricity was out for 4-6 hours each day. In addition, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip cannot drink from the tap water because it is salty. Water is bought in containers. The tap water is also cut off sporadically. This was true to a lesser extent in Ramallah, but the amount of water available for consumption was also limited.

I will use an extended quote from Mohammed's narrative that will describe the issues with Israeli occupation. He talks about Israel's ultimate control of the borders. The Palestinian territories became dependent on Israel. There is no opening from the sea or land to trade. The result is total dependence on Israeli products and control. This is what Israel wants. This does not fall well into the peace equation. The issue with occupation is the struggle over power. Israel does not want to change its security mentality into one that can treat its neighbors as equals. It still maintains the attitude of the occupier and the enforcing of rules that serve its existence. Mohammed's discussion focused on the economic and political situation. He foresaw that if there was no change, it would erupt into extremism on both sides. Mohammed was accurate in his prediction. The present situation is an evident consequence of Israel's lack of understanding of peace.

We need our independence. We need interdependence with others but not dependence. We do not need Israel's control on us. We do not mind in the future if there are equal relations to have interdependence. It means cooperation as equals in rights and responsibilities. Israel cannot tell me 'You are prohibited to import or export unless through me', or 'You cannot make this factory because you have to buy from me the products'. 'You are a consumer market for us'. The Israelis used to do that during occupation. A lot of people wanted to do small and medium-sized projects. Israel did not allow them because we must stay consumers of Israel's products. And independence for us is not only an existential issue but it is crucial. It is materialistic and very necessary to be able to continue living normally. This way we will ask for less help from the world.

If the Palestinians sell their flowers without Israeli intervention, they will make double the profit. We do not have an independent outlet to the world. It has to be through Israel...If somebody wants to come and invest, they will not do it for a nationalistic reason. Investment has its conditions.

If Israelis understand, they will give us our independence because we will help them expand to Arab countries. They can cooperate with us to build a bridge with the Arabs. How many years have they had a peace treaty with Egypt, there is no normalization with Egypt. Why? Because if the Palestinian problem is not solved, there will be no normalization. Israel does not have relations with its neighbors. Now it is a world of erasing boundaries and borders. You go from Finland to the Canary Islands and no one asks you for your I.D. It is not the world of checkpoints and the barred wires of Gaza. In the economy, the capital products and human beings need to move so that there will be development. We do not need to make islands of isolation. It will not develop. Israel has a problem with the environment, water, energy, and transportation. It cannot solve it alone. It has to make common projects with its neighbors. This is the 'complex' of Israelis because they think peace, they say peace is important but 'why should we give the Palestinians, let others give them like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan'. This will not work. Peace has to be that Israel benefits from it, not only to give something. Their view on the mechanism of peace is incorrect. They think if they make peace with us, they are losing. They prefer to keep us the losers forever. This is wrong. You cannot leave your neighbor with nothing. If there is a big difference between you and your neighbor financially, there will be disorder...There will be a black market and criminality.

They do not understand this. Some do, and more of Israelis understand this but Barak does not. He still thinks he is a general in the army. He is in control and he is powerful. And they scream that they do not have security. That is right. In the name of security, they 'kill' us. They do whatever they want. In security's name, they leave Palestinian products at the crossing point to rot because of security. They have to search all tomato boxes. It is a form of punishment. They prefer to punish the Palestinians. For example, we have 1,500 prisoners at least in their jails. They are with the peace solution and the PLO. They used to fight just like the Israelis used to fight. They were involved in battles. They have to let them go. To keep them in prison is senseless. Because if we are in a period of reconciliation and these prisoners are with peace, why keep them in prison? They cannot judge them on their past because we do not judge them on theirs. We negotiate with the Israeli officer who killed Palestinians. And also their hands are covered with blood. But he is free and ours are still in prison. It cannot work. Barak himself had a part in killing some of our leaders. There is no equality. They have to stop treating us as if they are masters and we are the occupiers, but we are under occupation and they are the occupiers. They have to take out the martial law that is in their minds. In their laws, schools, and T.V. – channel 7 – is a racist channel, despicable and it does incite in a way that Palestinians should leave. The implementation of resolution 242, some people on channel 7 and rabbis say that if Barak gives Israeli land to foreigners, they understand that if they enforce a small part of 242, a partial withdrawal from Abu Dees and El-Ezariya, they consider that Barak is letting go of Israeli land and giving it to foreigners. So a Palestinian who has lived here for thousands of years and has history, is a foreigner, but the rabbi who came from wherever is not.

When Rabin in the Knesset told them that ‘when we came to this country (*Li-Blad*), it is not true that it was empty, with no people’, there was chaos in the Knesset. They considered what he said to be very serious because they do not accept co-existence with us. This is what they need to learn to live with peace. But still there are those who understand that peace is in their interests. There is no end to the state of war until they give the Palestinians their rights and state and it is better to negotiate. We tell them, make use of Arafat’s presence. He can force a solution, if he is not here, whoever comes no one will listen to him. We listen to Arafat. He has a great national and political credit of 40 years through the struggle from 1960 until now. He can impose but someone else other than him cannot. Americans understand this well. It has to be Arafat, before he goes. Because if this does not happen, instead of negotiating with a Palestinian state they will negotiate with rights only, from river to sea. Now we are negotiating on the West Bank, a part of historical Palestine, only 22%. The alternative is extremism on both sides. God protect us from what will happen until Israelis understand. What I am telling you now, we did not say 20 years ago. We were not convinced 20 years ago. We used to say leave our Jews only. The rest we do not want. The Arab Palestinian Jew that used to live with us before, let him stay. But the one who came from Poland and Russia, has to go. This is not the right talk. Now we say ‘let them be in their part and we make our sovereign state’. And they are free to bring whomever they want to live with them...Camp David Summit will be extended. There will be another summit and other negotiations (July 16, 2000 – Gaza City).

As Oslo only provided a framework to work with and a schedule to deal with issues, those who returned did not return to the resolved issues of Palestine. Muneeb, a man in his late 50s, working in the Ministry of Trade, came to a place where there was no Palestinian state. He came to a process that Oslo promised would result in a state. He described his disappointment as not feeling at home and not realizing a complete sense of return. “We did not come to a state. There was partial occupation and partial independence, but not home because there is no sovereignty and no autonomy. Therefore, it limits feeling at home. You feel like a guest in a hotel. There is no democracy and no rule of law. It is not what you want home to be like. We cannot decide on everything. We did not take homeland back, but came back to a different society from how we remembered it and imagined it. There is more a feeling of disappointment than achievement. If you have memories here it is harder than if you do

not, because they will limit the capacity to integrate. In reality, we did not come back to homeland in a full way.”

Peace cannot be forced upon people. It is a state reached when the two sides in a conflict cannot live without peace. Hadi describes that the Palestinians accepted Israel, but Israel did not accept the Palestinian right to a state and a resolution to the Palestinian issues. The peace that Arafat and Barak were trying, unsuccessfully, to make at that time, was a peace that was not based on inequality. He says:

We accepted the other but the other did not accept us. Peace (*Salaam*) is not about Arafat and Barak enforcing a certain state called peace when it is not peace. Real peace is when ordinary people feel the basic level of equality between Palestinians and Israelis, like at airports and borders. When I go to Jordan there is intense security. Everything is in their hand. So how do we have a historical reconciliation? We accepted peace even though they raped our land, but what are they doing for peace? Is it settlements scattered in the Palestinian land?...In the Gaza Strip which is 360 km², they took 30 % of the land for settlements and for the roads around them. In the West Bank, 250 settlements implanted in Palestinian land like Swiss cheese...Is peace to continue denying us our rights? Is peace to deal that they are strong and we are weak? They still have the right to torture our Palestinian prisoners to get confessions.

All my life I was working for peace. I am convinced now totally that there is no peace with these people...When I cross Erez, I see a young man insulting an 80-year-old man. How will I believe in peace with him...They know Gaza produces flowers, the best in the world, to be exported to American and Canada, but they keep it at the borders for 2-3 days until it is damaged, also tomatoes and oranges. What kind of peace is that? This is the truth that people must understand...For security reasons they have to search every piece of tomato, see if there is a bullet in it. What kind of peace is this? They want peace their way, the way of humiliating people, humiliation at the borders and checkpoints...

Where are the human rights they talk about, especially America, which considers itself the protector of human rights and classifies who is a terrorist and who is not? Do human rights stop when it comes to Palestinians? (January 5, 2000 – Gaza City)

Hadi sees the problem in terms of the Israeli mentality, that it is a security-based state, not really interested in finding a peaceful solution. Salim was distressed with the peace agreement and what it actually achieved. He expresses his view on the problems he found with the peace initiative.

Palestinians are giving, but the Israelis are not. They left the Gaza Strip because they wanted to leave, and Ramallah and Jenin, the same thing because they were over-populated...The peace process is like being in the I.C. It needs surgery...Israel was established on the basis of security and oppression. Every Arab is against you and every Arab is wanted. There is nothing more to give and relinquish (January 5, 2000 – Gaza City).

In a discussion I attended between two couples in Gaza City, there was an interaction that occurs frequently in social gatherings. This interaction expresses that while some blame primarily the occupation, others focus on the misdemeanors of the PNA and not adjusting well to life in the Palestinian territories.

- Hadi: West Bank and Gaza, aren't they one homeland?
 Mira: No, they are two.
 Amjad: Later, Gaza City will be a homeland and Jabalia⁵⁵ a homeland, not just here and the West Bank.
 Hadi: Gaza and the West Bank are one homeland. Can you go from Gaza to the West Bank?
 Amjad: No.
 Mira: Why?
 Amjad: You need permission from Israel.
 Hadi: Is it easy to get it?
 Amjad: No.
 Hadi: Why? Israel wants this to happen.
 Amjad: That is why there will not be a *Watan*.
 Mira: We do not want permits but human beings. We are a people that want to build a *Watan*, clean this dirt, fix this corruption, robbing and see what we can do. There are thousands of thieves here.
 Rima: They took our children, our jobs, and our money. They are benefiting and we have nothing. They took everything
 Mira: We work hard and are nationalistic, but corruption is from the top to the bottom. How does one stop it?
 Amjad: I used to live on the hope of return, to a changed reality.
 Hadi: I will explain. First it is Israel. Second, the problems we have now, if you think it can be better than this, you are wrong. This is the first time we rule ourselves. Third we have a lot of capabilities but we need the experience. If we talk about particular individuals, they are mortal. We do not say that we have no mistakes. Your project is a failure if you listen to these conversations, go and see for yourself and then judge. If you sit with the 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, each one of them will tell you a different view⁵⁶ (January 8, 2000 – Gaza City).

⁵⁵ Jabalya is a city in the north of the Gaza Strip.

⁵⁶ Mira and Hadi are first couple, and Amjad and Rima are the second couple.

There is also the Palestinian internal criticism that will be elaborated on in the next section, where according to Arafat, Palestinians bear some responsibility for the present situation. Arafat talked about the pitfalls in dealing with the occupation. His main criticism was that Palestinians wanted all or nothing. Their leadership was not politically developed and the people were not satisfied with anything. According to Arafat, now the situation has shifted. The Palestinians want a resolution but the Israelis do not demonstrate a willingness to have peace. Palestinians had to change in order to reach this stage; the Israelis now need to adjust their priorities.

Arafat spoke of a reality prior to the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. Now there is no war but also no peace. Arafat's narrative reveals a more or less balanced critique of the self and the other.

In 1993, people here were really tired, repulsed, and depressed. There was no order and no system. Now it is like paradise compared to 1993. Some of our inherent stupidity still says 'occupation was better'. In my opinion Oslo was a trial to come out of the mud a little bit but still we have a long struggle, a different kind of struggle. But still in our minds we live with artillery.

People think there is peace and truce with Israel but there is not. It is a temporary agreement. There are no compromises because Jews have everything and we are only taking from them. We did not have anything. They had everything and now we are trying to bring back our rights. Therefore, there is no peace. Yes, no war, but no peace.

I support peace if it is available for us. We are still politically underdeveloped: the political management is all underdeveloped even the PNA and the people. PNA makes mistakes and mismanages its strategies and the people do not like anything, a people that cries for the lost past. 'We curse it and then cry for it.' In the last ten years, some circumstances and milieus affected Palestinians positively. Now we search for what we have to do with what we have. There is no perfection in life. We were always looking for the best or come close to what is better. We wanted 100% not 30%. It is an either/or policy, everything or nothing. It has always repeated itself. We are a bit better now. We need the art of politics to be realistic and we can get it. It is better to look for what we can do to be better, otherwise it will collapse over our heads. Still we did not lose hope.

We exaggerate everything, the good and the bad...we should be more realistic to be good for our homeland and not look for exaggerations.

I will take the I.D. from the 'military rule' so long as it allows me to enter, though I hate it but I have to accept it. If I do that, I am not saying 'Long live Israel' or 'I am working for Israel'. We need to stop saying no and letting go of opportunity. We are a nation that refuses.

It is normal that people are depressed but still we are steadfast and the world is changing its view on Jews and on us. We have started to use our minds more; even our enemies in Israel are accepting us.

Now, we are willing to live in peace, but Israelis are acting like bulls. We used to do that before, now Israelis have inherited it (March 11, 2000 – Ramallah).

Based on my observations, there was a positive dimension to the return of the PLO. Return to Palestine created an opportunity where the Palestinians in exile were able to interact with the Israeli public and government. This was not possible in exile where there was no contact with the Israeli 'other'. With return, it became easier to exchange ideas and opinions that led to a better understanding with the Israelis. Some of the people I interacted with said that it allowed them 'to know the Israelis for who they truly are' and their racism. Based on the experience in the field, I observed that the return experience was beneficial beyond that, since it created a situation where the two parties had to work together.

Though Hadi and Arafat talked with distress about the Israeli mentality and attitude, which they came to know upon return, the positive aspect of return is overshadowed. This is probably because there were more significant issues at that time. In the long run, this interaction and any future relationship between Israelis and Palestinians can be seen as part of bridging the gap and reaching reconciliation that is based on mutual understanding. The return of the PLO allowed for the negative experience of the Israeli occupation in its different forms. It also provided the PLO returnees with more interaction and experience with Israelis that is needed for the future. The insiders and Arab Israelis had the advantage of the direct contact with Israel since

1948 and 1967 respectively, giving them a perspective on the conflict and the Israelis that the outsiders lacked.

6.3 Return and the PNA

The PLO returnees now working with the Palestinian National Authority have had a positive and negative impact on social life. Their presence and interaction with other Palestinians had created much discontent, especially in the early stages of return (1993-94) as I have indicated in the earlier discussion. I found people were openly critical of returnees and the role of the PNA in general.

Both insiders and outsiders indicated their discontent with the practices and the role of the PNA's high-ranking officials and security forces. As indicated in the earlier section, some informants explained their disappointment and offered the occupation as the reason behind the inability to form a good authority. Based on my observations, I believe that this is true to a certain extent. The Palestinian leadership has not governed itself on its own land before. The local population was used to a lack of law and order (*Intifada* years). They were not used to having their own people police them. In addition, the effects of occupation and peace deadlocks offer the right conditions for an inefficient authority.

In addition, individuals within the PNA expressed frustration regarding the practices of the PNA. The locals too were unhappy with their authority. Part of the insiders' frustration that I observed was a result of the expectations of the insiders from their political leadership in exile. The insiders expected the PLO returnees to be perfect and to treat them as equals. That may not have been the case. First, the PLO felt obliged to reward those who struggled with it outside with certain privileges and job security. As

a result, some individuals were placed in positions they were not qualified for. Second, some individuals misused their positions for their personal interests, whether to establish businesses or to exercise their control over their employees. They would, in some cases, use their authority to get rid of those they found challenging or threatening. In other cases, I observed a few examples where PNA officials, mainly from the PLO returnees, would use their positions to secure jobs for their wives and relatives, or a monthly salary without actually working. Above all, some high-ranking officials (well-known in the West Bank and Gaza) had private companies and helped their families in building business and investments.

In conclusion, there was the element of the mistrust of leadership and authority. The impact of the Oslo accord and what it brought to Palestinian insiders and outsiders was not very substantial. The misuse of power, mismanagement of finances, and the misallocation of positions to unqualified individuals all contributed to the lack of trust. Insiders and outsiders also lacked each other's experience, and therefore mistrusted each other. The insiders were not experienced in dealing with the political corruption within the PLO. The PLO and its cadre have had their experience with corruption as they lived it with the PLO. Therefore, there was a division between the people and the authority and a gap within the PNA itself, with those critical of its practices.

I discussed with all informants the role of the PNA, its violations and misuse of power. While informants such as Hadi spoke openly about PNA mismanagement and cases of corruption, this was to him part of the bigger and more urgent problem, Israeli occupation. Though blaming occupation can be seen as a rationalization for the poor behavior of the political authority, informants differed in what they considered important.

While some such as Hadi believed that this internal Palestinian problem would go away if occupation ended, others like Fatima and Nabila believe that there needs to be work on both the 'Palestinian house' and on resolving the issues with Israel, all at the same time.

According to Hadi,

Most of violations are coming from ignorance. For the first time in our history we rule ourselves. We were not allowed to establish our own state since the Ottomans, British, Israelis, Egyptians, and Jordanians. We have all the necessary capabilities but we need to be organized and directed. This will take time and certain conditions that need to be present. One main condition is to be a state with total sovereignty without interference from others...In normal conditions all this corruption will be limited and controlled but now the leadership is focusing its attention on the bigger issues. Arafat works night and day to ensure withdrawal from 5% of the land and this occupies him and takes him away from other issues. This is not rationalization but there are reasons for these conditions.

This does not mean that Abu Amar⁵⁷ does everything right but his interest is in a homeland with sovereignty for its people. This is the greater concern. In the public sector, a lot of officials use their position to benefit their companies while its known around the world that the public sector should not play a role in the private sector. A lot of officials have companies, factories and use their position to their own advantage and this affects negatively the Palestinian economy. But the Israeli economy also destroys the Palestinian economy. In the real sense, we do not have an economy because of a sort of pressure that Israel puts on us. Our primary imports are from Israel. We have approximately 3.6 \$ billion per year worth of imports from Israel while with Jordan \$18 million, and Egypt \$30 million...because they control us. Weapons imported are not allowed unless from Israel. They stop or hinder the establishment of Palestinian factories because they might replace what we import from Israel (January 5, 2000 – Gaza City).

Hadi recognizes the violations of the PNA officials yet stresses that the root cause is first the Israeli occupation. Salim, suggests a similar point of view.

The PNA made many mistakes but still there are people who want to work and develop. But we have no stability to develop and create institutions because of Israeli interferences in everything - land, water, and electricity. There are many criticisms of the PNA, but still the World Bank and NGOs interfere in PNA decisions of development (July 27, 2000 – Ramallah).

⁵⁷ Abu Amaar is Yasser Arafat's political name.

6.3 Social Conditions and Interactions

Ramallah represents the cultural capital of the Palestinian territories. Its sister city is El-Bireh, which was originally inhabited by Muslim, while Ramallah's inhabitants were mainly Christian. Because of its proximity to Jordan, its inhabitants have had more access to the outside world. Much of the population of Ramallah and El-Bireh has made another home in the United States. After the Oslo agreement, many of the original families returned to create a new life with their families, now that the PLO had returned. Many returnees preferred living in Ramallah rather than Gaza City. Since PLO returnees have lived in more cosmopolitan cities, their preference for Ramallah was understandable, though not all were able to choose to live there.

Social life and interaction was different in Ramallah and Gaza City. The history of these two cities are different, therefore, the nature of Palestinian society and social interaction is different. Ramallah, located on the West of the Jordan River, had an exit to the world via Jordan. Its inhabitants could travel more freely, so they have the experience of traveling to other cities around the world. Ramallah was open to receiving people who had lived outside because her own inhabitants have lived elsewhere.

Ramallah has more restaurants and cafes, and has been transformed from a town to a more or less cosmopolitan small city. Al-Kasaba theatre, a private company endorsed by the Ministry of Culture, presents Palestinian plays that attract the public. It also presents foreign films year-round. In addition, men and women mix more freely in Ramallah than in Gaza City. It also became a home to more foreigners coming to work. In Ramallah, I observed more social activity at night and younger people going to dance on Thursday and Saturday nights. Palestinians living in Israel would come to party on

Saturday nights, since it is the official holiday in Israel. I also observed mostly young Palestinians interacting and socializing in restaurants and cafes in Ramallah such as Kanbata, Kasaba, Stones, El-Aseel, and Angelo's. In these places, mostly young adults would gather to socialize. I also observed that women in Ramallah would dress up and follow Western fashion.

Gaza City has a different history. First, there is a population imbalance factor worth considering. Gaza City's population is about 300,000, compared to Ramallah's 28,000 (www.Passia.org). It's only opening was to Egypt via Rafah crossing point. Much of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip have never traveled beyond it. This has resulted in a different social experience and exposure to the world outside. I have observed an increasing number of resorts over-looking the Mediterranean Sea. These were mainly private investments. There is also an increasing number of restaurants and cafes. Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut have opened restaurants in the center of the city.

However, I observed less social interaction and activity at night as compared to Ramallah. Perhaps this was because of the size of the city and its larger population. Other individuals I talked too supported this observation. With the return of the PLO, Gazans who were not allowed to have a picnic on the sea began spending their evenings socializing there. People had more liberty to move throughout the Gaza Strip, as compared to the pre-Oslo period.

Lastly, upon return, there were major social issues that appeared to be a problem, like the clash between the insiders and outsiders (Hancock 1999, Challand 2001). The returnees had to adjust to a new social reality, different from their reality in exile. In

addition, the returnees' identity mainly formed in exile in cosmopolitan cities. Their identity was based on mobility because of their political involvement with the PLO. The insiders had to adjust to a new group of Palestinians they had idealized as the freedom fighters but did not know well. Their identity formed within the context of living in isolation, underdevelopment, occupation, and resistance to this occupation. Therefore a clash of identity appeared between the local people and the outsiders.

I have chosen a part of my interview with Muneeb, as he analyzes why this clash took place. There were two groups, with two different experiences that molded their identity and social behavior. The two groups did not speak the same language and did not share the same outlook. This could only happen when a segment of the Palestinian population in exile returned. What will happen if and when other groups of Palestinians do return? Other identities and experiences will come to face each other and Palestinians will learn to deal with the new reality. This reality of the different identities within Palestinians was a product of their diaspora, but it was also a product of the social class divisions and predominant rurality before the diaspora.

Return is old memories, idealism, and disfigured memories, always remembering what is beautiful and making it more beautiful. It is satisfaction and disappointment. Reality is different from memories about Palestine because urban-dwellers were not connected to rural life. There is a big cultural gap between urban (westernized, liberal community) and rural (very traditional and rigid). There is no social mobility. Before 1967, society was isolated from the world and therefore underdeveloped. Life in Tunisia was different. It affected our being and allowed us to interact with other societies. Because the PLO was involved in world activity, the PLO became cosmopolitan in its experience. This increased the feeling of alienation between PLO members and insiders. We were open to world influences while working with the PLO in Lebanon and Tunisia, and hence allowed a connection to liberal societies. The insiders saw us as aliens and had a shock. We came back to an unchanged society, under occupation, and isolated, a besieged society that was not allowed to see modernization. Agriculture and the value of the rural family broke down. Parental authority broke. Now young men earn money. The Intifada (7 years of no schools, no jobs, no police) was also devastating to Palestinian society inside...Returnees

had illusions. In fact, there were in the West Bank and Gaza drugs, crimes, breakdown of agricultural society, and more unskilled labor...

Now we are back home at least. We have roots here but when we sit with those we used to know before, there is a big language difference. We talk two different languages and have different value systems. So, we are strangers to them. They did not change, or did we change too much? They call us the Tunisian people, a different category from the insiders...40% of young men were imprisoned in Israel. We were imprisoned in Arab countries and therefore have different experiences. Every prison causes psychological disfiguring and therefore, we do not belong to them, and they do not belong to us. It is reality (June 29, 2000 – Ramallah).

The Israeli occupation fed on this idea of the division within Palestinian society. The categorization that took place was not because of return. It was a natural consequence of the different experiences and of a new adjustment process. The insiders and outsiders suffered in different ways. Outsiders suffered from the lack of protection, rights, and stability. This can be said of the insiders as well. However, as Hadi expresses, the outsiders have lost everything and did not have anything to lean on. That being said, it can also be said of the insiders. The only difference was that the insiders were still in their homeland and the outsiders were in exile.

They used to call us 'comers from outside' and it is a very disturbing name because whoever lived inside or outside suffered like the insiders, if not more, at least those who stayed inside did not lose everything; maybe they took part of his land but he still lived in his house. But those outside, living in 'exile', lived different. They did not have an identity, did not have a state to protect him, no basic human rights... Israel is responsible for creating this division as well. The occupier also fed the idea of outsider. Occupation really stressed how those returnees had cars and villas. Take for example a family like us, we came to homeland with our clothes and did not have anything (January 5, 2000 – Gaza City).

The idea of who suffered more and the tendency within Palestinians to categorize those with different experiences as 'others' is part of the Palestinian experience and social constructions prior to occupation. It was carried into Palestinian society and the experience in the diaspora, after occupation. In this social history, the rural person is

different from the urban. Individuals were privileged because of their family names and tribal ties. Other social divisions included refugees vs. holders of passports, refugees and the displaced, 1948 refugees and 1967 refugees, and holders of the 5-year Jordanian passport vs. the 2-year passport. PLO returnees, like Hadi, Salim, and Khalil are among my informants who found themselves separated in terms of their outside experience from other Palestinians. Different values and experiences caused this apparent clash and gap to happen. This gap was not supported by all informants. Mohammed and Sami indicated that it is normal that such divisions take place because of the lack of experience of each group with the other. They do not find this division relevant in their lives since their friends are from both the returnees and the insiders.

In exile, there was a more cohesive presence with other Palestinians. The mere fact that one was Palestinian meant that he or she was a member of the family of Palestinians in exile. When returnees came back to their families, they began to find how alienated they were from them. Issues that had remained unresolved, such as inheritance, became a problem. Now there were returnees coming to claim their family inheritance rights, and they were not received with an open heart.

There was also the issue of residency. Other family members found residence in an absentee's home, left by a family member. Returnees began asking to live back in their homes, or share in the residence. This was also accentuated by the sour economic situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some insiders were thinking of how to preserve their homes and volatile economic situation by not dealing with inheritance issues. As returnees, they assumed that there would be no problems with their families upon return, therefore it was a shock to experience these kinds of conflict. There was the

lack of the warmth of solidarity and sharing that outsiders had in exile. Nabila talked about her personal experience of this lack of solidarity with her family. She was surprised to find that her family only wanted to use her position for their personal gains and did not care about her and her problems. As people would come to her to solve their problems, she helped all those that she could help, but could not jeopardize her integrity and responsible position to be used for personal benefits.

What we found here we did not expect. For example family and relatives first welcomed you, but later started to suggest that you should give them something. They do not feel with you as a human being. All your life is gone to giving and work and you do not have anything personal. They do not feel this side. They only ask about you when they want something from you, and this is very painful. A lot of people had direct family problems, residence, and inheritance. When we were outside, we did not think of that. We thought there would be compassion and warmth. So maybe it is fear of the future. Whoever gets something, wants to keep it and not give his brother any. These feelings affected social relations. Outside there was cohesion and connection. Wherever there was a Palestinian, we felt they were like a member of our family. You feel you are among your family. But now everyone thinks of himself or herself. This is painful and unexpected, leaving you feeling alienated, fearful of the future for those who worked for homeland in dedication, and fearful of losing hope that was behind all this effort (September 18, 2000 – Gaza city).

These elements of stratification particularly the internal/external or insider/outsider divide could be a basis of eventual class and social divisions in the future Palestinian state. Other divisions could possibly emerge with the return of other groups of Palestinians, such as the refugees in Lebanon. The Palestinian diaspora joined by the dream of return have had a different experience from those who stayed in Palestine. These divisions within the Palestinian population, as a result of the different experiences, are time and again expressed in terms of notions of 'modernity' and 'tradition'. Those who were in exile such as the PLO returnees have lived in cosmopolitan cities and have had the opportunity to travel and live in different countries around the world, while the insiders like refugees in the Gaza Strip have never traveled outside the Gaza Strip.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented observations gathered during a nine-month period of fieldwork in Ramallah and Gaza City and discourses of everyday life of PLO returnees. These observations and narratives of return dealt with some of the main issues PLO returnees have expressed in Chapter 4 and 5. They highlight that the experience of return is an uneasy one, requiring dealing with the reality of the Israeli occupation and the different ways Palestinians encounter it. The return experience is also about living and dealing with the new Palestinian authority. This experience is new for insiders and outsiders and resulted in positive and negative reactions. Finally, there was adapting to a new social life and dealing in a new setting of social interaction.

The primary problem was the Israeli occupation. There was Israel's obsession with security. It controlled borders and movement. There was economic dependence and control of any Palestinian economic activity. There was no Palestinian state with borders. There was no sovereignty over the Palestinian territories except in Area A. There was no independence for Palestinians to build their state. To sum up, the occupier humiliated and controlled the destiny of the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These issues were illustrated by PLO returnees. Israel did not implement the peace agreements. It was more powerful militarily and in control. The result was an understanding that it was not willing to give back a part of the homeland, 22% of historic Palestine or to give the Palestinians their rights and accept co-existence as equals.

Internal issues relate to social relations among the Palestinians themselves. The practices of the PNA and the issues between the insiders and outsiders were connected. They reflected the vulnerable situation within Palestinian society, as it dealt for the first

time with a Palestinian governing body. The social problems fed into the divisions between locals and outsiders. The misconduct of PNA officials also accentuated the gap and provided evidence of the internal problems.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

...the interplay between geography, memory and invention, in the sense that invention must occur if there is recollection – is particularly relevant to a twentieth century instance, that of Palestine, which instances an extraordinary rich and intense conflict of at least two memories, two sorts of historical invention, two sorts of geographical imagination. I want to argue that we can go beyond the headlines and the repetitively reductive media accounts of the Middle East conflict and discern there a much more interesting and subtle conflict than what is customarily talked about. Only by understanding that special mix of geography generally and landscape in particular with historical memory and, as I said, an arresting form of invention can we begin to grasp the persistence of conflict and the difficulty of resolving it, a difficulty that is far too complex and grand than the current peace process could possibly envisage, let alone resolve (Said 1999b:10-11).

In this thesis, I have investigated the notion of homeland and return from the perspective of PLO returnees in the post-Oslo context. Two main arguments have been made throughout the thesis. The first is the discrepancy between the notion of homeland and the notion of a state. This was presented in Chapter 4. 'Constructing the Homeland of Palestine.' The second argument is the disparity between the notion of the state and the lived reality in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This argument was developed in Chapter 5 and 6 in the investigation of the return experience and fieldwork observations and everyday narratives, respectively.

The lexical analysis of the notion homeland in Palestine provides evidence in language that points to personal, cultural, and political aspects of homeland. Three dimensions to the notion of homeland in Palestine were revealed and articulated by informants.

Homeland, is a construct on three levels, emerging within a social and historical context particular to the Palestinian case. It involves and is connected to notions of space, place, and landscape. The meaning and value of a place is gathered by experiencing it. Memory is also part of the construction of homeland. A particular memory of a national group is constructed to serve its national aspirations. Within the discourse on memory, are feelings that are developed into a sense of attachment and belonging to a place. According to informants, homeland in Palestine is a place imbued with meaning. It also has personal, cultural and social, and political value to PLO returnees. The theoretical work on the notion of space being transformed into place, and landscape, explains how the place, homeland in Palestine, was experienced, imagined, and longed for. The concept of homeland involves the interplay of place, personal and collective memory and identity formation. An appreciation of the sense of place and the deep emotional attachment to Palestine which have been intertwined with political conflict are vital to resolving or redefining the issues of the Palestinian homeland.

The chapter on homeland reveals that issues of statehood are only a part of the issues surrounding homeland. The concept of homeland can include the establishment of a state on it, although the notion of a state does not involve all the dimensions found in the notion of homeland. Of particular significance in the case of Palestine, is that it is not only a homeland, but a homeland occupied politically and militarily, which has undergone visible changes to its place and landscape. These changes and the occupation further increase the already heavy emotional charge of homeland. . In addition, the notion of homeland in Palestine is complicated by the issue of political and military

occupation and economic dependency. These factors add another dimension to the construction of homeland which has not been dealt with in the literature.

The experience in exile of the diaspora played a part in considering homeland in Palestine. Since the informants are all members of the diasporic community, they were joined together by national aspirations for independence and the dream of return. Their contribution to the theoretical discussion on the diaspora provided an explanation of the multiplicity of experiences and the formation of different identities within a national group.

Homeland is constructed intellectually, emotionally and practically by a national group whether they were a part of the diasporic community, remained in their homeland, or became refugees within their homeland. This research suggests the construction of many different visions of homeland among Palestinians, including the PLO returnees.

The conceptualization of the notion of homeland in Palestine in this thesis contributes to the notion of homeland beyond Palestine, the notion of homeland as discussed in the literature. It suggests that the return to homeland may bring with it social stratification between people based on social and economic class, and other, unanticipated problems related to one's place in the new order.

The occupied homeland has implications for the process of return, the ideal that cannot be realized, and returnees who do not have access to their homeland as it was. Occupation has led to the conceptualization of homeland as victim. In a sense, the very emotional attachment to the land comes into direct conflict with the occupation and the changes made by the occupiers. As noted in this thesis, the image of rape in Palestinian narrative and literature is a visceral and powerful image. It does not suggest that any

compromise is possible as long as the Israeli military is in the Palestinian territories and there is political and economic hegemony. This conceptualization of the occupied homeland makes one rethink the notions of space, place and landscape of homeland because return to it does not mean that one has regained the space, place, and landscape of homeland. This insight derived from this research will be helpful for further work on the notion of homeland in general.

For further research, it would be interesting to extend the topic of this research to other groups in the diaspora and to insiders regarding their notion of homeland and vision of the state. It would be interesting to see if the different groups in the Palestinian population, such as the insiders and external refugees have similar or different experiences and perspectives on Palestine as a homeland and its future. It would also be interesting to make a cross-generational and cross-gender analysis. Perhaps the younger generations of Palestinians who have grown up in refugee camps or under the occupation have a different vision of homeland and of return to it than the older generation I interviewed.

For future research, it would also be interesting to consider what would happen to the sense of place and the attachment to it as Palestine becomes more urbanized. How will memory handed down by generations to preserve identity and develop it be used to reshape the sense and attachment to the place? Will this connection be lost, or be reconstructed as Palestinian society undergoes changes?

The second argument considers the discrepancy between the notion and dream of statehood and the lived reality faced by the PLO cadres who returned. The experiences of the informants ranged from complete disillusionment with the homeland to which they

returned, to normalizing their life there and accepting it as it is, while still maintaining the need for further struggle within the homeland. Interestingly, informants did not express any regrets for having returned. However, the circumstances to which they returned were the cause of distress and anguish.

The experiences of exiled Palestinians who returned with the PLO to the West Bank and Gaza Strip shows how a sense of identity has been forged in exile, and the vision of homeland, deconstructed and reconstructed. This results in a mixture of illusion, reality, and a movement back and forth between the two - disillusionment and acceptance of the present reality- if such extremes exist independently. It is also flexible, subjective, and humanly experienced. Homeland as demonstrated by my informants is a continuous discourse that is inventing and reinventing itself all the time. It is a tangle of romanticism, a reflection on exile, and readjustment after return which all involve the subjective experience.

It also brings into focus the emergence of new processes of stratification within the Palestinian populations, as in the relationship between insiders and outsiders. These processes of categorization that take place upon return are not discussed in the literature on the relationship between homeland and exile. Divisions such as insider/outsider become apparent when returning groups come face to face with each other and their different experiences. These divisions can also be expressed in terms of modern/traditional, cosmopolitan/local, urban/rural and also those who experienced occupation and those who experienced exile. The less cosmopolitan and more traditional character of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who did not leave, is balanced by their history of resisting the Israeli occupation for three decades.

The PLO accomplished its objective of return through the Oslo process which began with the signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993. However, the process failed to establish a Palestinian state. This failure was caused by the inability to reach a solution with Israel on issues crucial to the Palestinian leadership and population such as the right of return of refugees. The reality on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza Strip suggested that the peace process was heading towards a major impasse.

Other problems, such as the practices of the PNA and the difficulties in adjusting to a new social life, were also experienced upon return. The unresolved issue of the right of all refugees to return was a constant reminder of how little had been achieved in the fight for their own state. It was, however, the political situation itself, the discrepancy between the notion of a state and the reality of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, clearly revealed in the narratives of return, that was the most distressing..

While it is not surprising that there is a disparity between the notion of homeland and the notion of a state, the chapter on return demonstrated a discrepancy between the notion of a state⁵⁸, and what that entails and the daily reality of life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Evidently, based on the experience of PLO returnees, the notion of homeland and the reality of achieving it are far away. Homeland is real while the dream of attaining statehood is still that - just a dream, and the reality of daily life in the West Bank and Gaza strip is difficult and dangerous.

Though the majority of returnees accepted the two-state solution – a Jewish state and an Arab state - they still see this as a temporary solution, believing, in some cases, that the only real solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is to return to one state. They

⁵⁸ At the time this fieldwork was conducted, the PNA establishments were intact. Since March 2002, there have been more violent incursions by Israeli armed forces that destroyed most, if not all, of the structure of the PNA. In a sense, there is no longer an active authority as compared to pre-*Al-Aqsa Intifada*.

did not see that a two-state solution would ever work for Palestine in the long run, considering that Palestinians still believe that their historic homeland is the Mandated-Palestine. In addition, it is a small territorial area where a two-state solution might be difficult to sustain in the long run. In the one-state solution, the homeland would correspond to the notion of a modern state, not a state found within one's homeland. However, this solution is not on the agenda in the peace negotiations with Israel. The two-state solution has been the political compromise, but it still has not been achieved.

As this fieldwork ended a day before the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began, the analysis of the data needs two contexts: pre- *Al-Aqsa Intifada* and post- *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, because the whole situation has changed. First, the Oslo process has apparently ended and seems no longer relevant. Second, the PNA structure has been completely destroyed, particularly since March 2002, and its legitimacy and power minimized. Thirdly, Israel has militarily re-occupied and destroyed the Palestinian infrastructure, mostly in the West Bank, and also in the Gaza Strip. Fourthly, there has been a dramatic increase in suicide attacks in Israel proper. Finally, since Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon came to office, the peace negotiations have collapsed.

The present *Al-Aqsa Intifada* leads one to conclude that flaws in the Oslo agreement are the reason for the present day situation. Too many issues were left for the Interim period. The agreement also did not provide the right premise for the development of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The *Al-Aqsa Intifada* can be said to be an uprising mainly targeting the Israeli occupation but it also arise out of the distress with the role of the PNA, and serves as a critique of the PLO/Israeli Oslo agreements.

There are two main political factors in this equation of Palestinian independence. The first is the PNA, with its lack of experience, mismanagement of resources, and strategic miscalculations. The second, and more critical factor is the continuing manifestation of Israeli political and military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (borders of the 1967 land). This has been justified first by the post-911 situation and the American-led war against terrorism. Israel used suicide bombers as a justification for the escalation of military incursions into Palestinians territories, for the same war on terror that the United States is waging. In this context, the return of PLO returnees is itself uncertain. Members of the organization, including Yasser Arafat himself, can be deported back into exile at the will of the Israeli government.

What does the experience of return to homeland say about the discrepancies noted above? In terms of the notion of homeland and the state, informants returned to the homeland they had dreamed of. They have come back to face the new reality of their homeland. Some have realized that it is not the homeland that they imagined or remembered, yet even with all the disillusionments expressed, Palestine is the Palestine that returnees knew all their life. Geographically, however, it is different: villages have been eradicated, houses demolished, and changes made to its physical and cultural landscape. While accepting the two-state solution, according to the PLO returnees' notion of homeland, their houses and places of origin, now a part of Israel, are still in their homeland, Palestine. There was a sense of connection and attachment to Palestine visible with all the people that I met. Though each person I interviewed or met described his or her experience differently, they had all wanted to return. All had a connection with Palestine as a homeland, through political and human struggle, family memories,

childhood, death, misfortune, and the experience of exile. The experience in exile was used as a challenge to make true the dream of parents and grandparents to return. Therefore, even with the shock of return that was sometimes experienced, and the changed view of Palestine, these individuals are not willing to leave.

The PLO returnees' vision emerges out of their particular social and political position. Based on this research, it is argued that the position of the PLO returnees will lead to the prevalent vision of the Palestinian homeland in the political arena. This is pivotal for future research on Palestine. The PLO returnees are also significant for the future of the Palestinians. They will be the ones to define the official and public notion of Palestine as homeland and the Palestinian state-to-be. Therefore, at this stage in time, it is important to know who will be defining the homeland. In the long run, this work can be used as a precursor for the conflict between the states' vision of Palestine with the views of other Palestinian groups. I would like to conclude this thesis with some thoughts from Edward Said:

...the interplay between memory, place, and invention can do if it is not to be used for the purposes of exclusion, that is, if it is to be used for liberation and coexistence between societies whose adjacence requires a tolerable form sustained reconciliation...Israelis and Palestinians are now so intertwined through history, geography and political actuality that it seems...absolute folly to try and plan the future of one without that of the other. The problem with the American-sponsored Oslo processes was that it was premised on a notion of partition and separation, whereas everywhere one looks in the territory of historical Palestine, Jews and Palestinians live together. This notion of separation has also closed those two unequal communities of suffering to each other (Said 1999b: 19).

My fieldwork experience and the narratives of those I interviewed and met in Ramallah and Gaza City, concur with Said's observation and outlook for the future. Though this thesis has tackled a difficult emotional, social, and political notion and

experience, it is hoped that it will contribute to a better understanding of what is at stake here. It demonstrates that there are rights that need to be recognized and a need for change. Perhaps this need for urgent change, which applies to both Palestinians and Israelis, will make for a compromise that is not based on separation and further division of Palestine. However, in the homeland of Palestine, which is occupied by a force greater in power, the occupier is required to use its power justly.

In light of all that has been discussed and analyzed, and as partial as it is, within the grander narratives of the 'imagined community', reconciliation is the only way out. This resolution will come out of understanding the 'other', accepting, and acknowledging the different experiences. This thesis has provided for a perspective on the experience of a segment of the Palestinian population that needs to be heard. Though some views are extreme and highly emotional, they do not indicate that there is no future to be shared and no peace that is conceivable. As a conclusion to this thesis, I believe that as there is better knowing of the issues of the homeland, there is a way to pave for a future of coexistence (Personal field notes - September 28, 2000).

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APPENDIX I

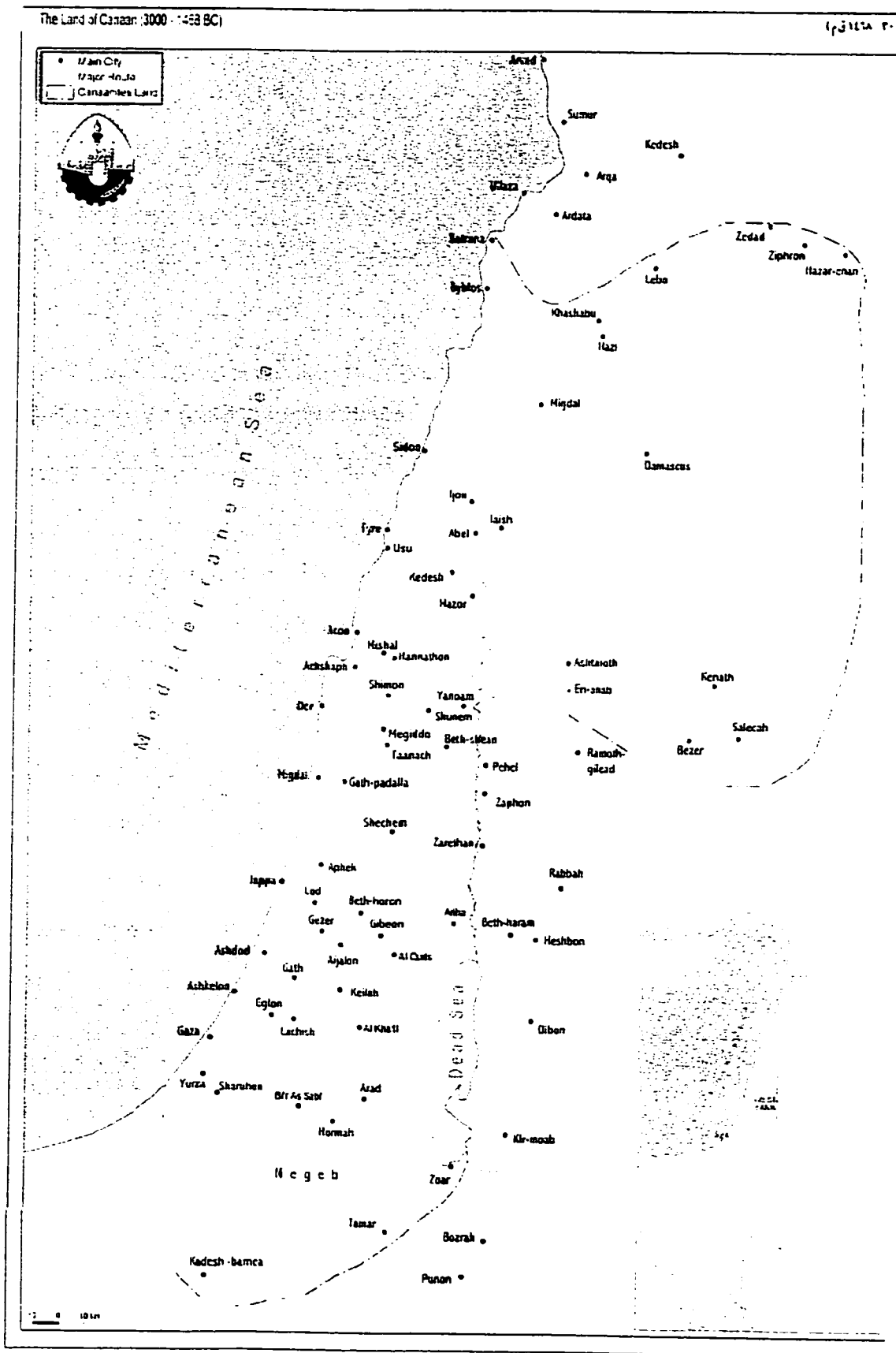
MAPS

1. The Land of Canaan (3000-1468 B.C.)
2. Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916
3. Palestine Under the British Mandate, 1923-1948
4. Percentage of Arab and Jewish Population by Sub-District in 1922 and 1944
5. Landownership in Palestine and Palestinian Villages Depopulated in 1948 and 1967
6. Population Movements 1948-1951
7. United Nations Partition Plan – UN Resolution 181 and Rhodes Armistice Line
8. Palestinian Refugees: UNRWA Refugee Camps, 2001
9. West Bank and Gaza Strip Governorates and Districts According to Jordanian and Egyptian Administrations between 1948 and 1967
10. Wars and Border Changes (1948-1982)
11. Oslo I (Gaza Jericho) Agreement on May 4, 1994
12. Oslo II Interim Agreement on September 28, 1995- Map 1
13. Oslo II, 1995 – Map 2
14. Wye Memorandum, 1998
15. Sharm-Esh-Sheikh, 1999
16. Geopolitical Map of the West Bank and Gaza, October 1999
17. The West Bank and Gaza Strip, March 2000
18. Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map Presented by Israel, Camp David, July 2000
19. Palestinian Bantustans in the West Bank
20. Israeli Military Checkpoints in the West Bank

Sources:

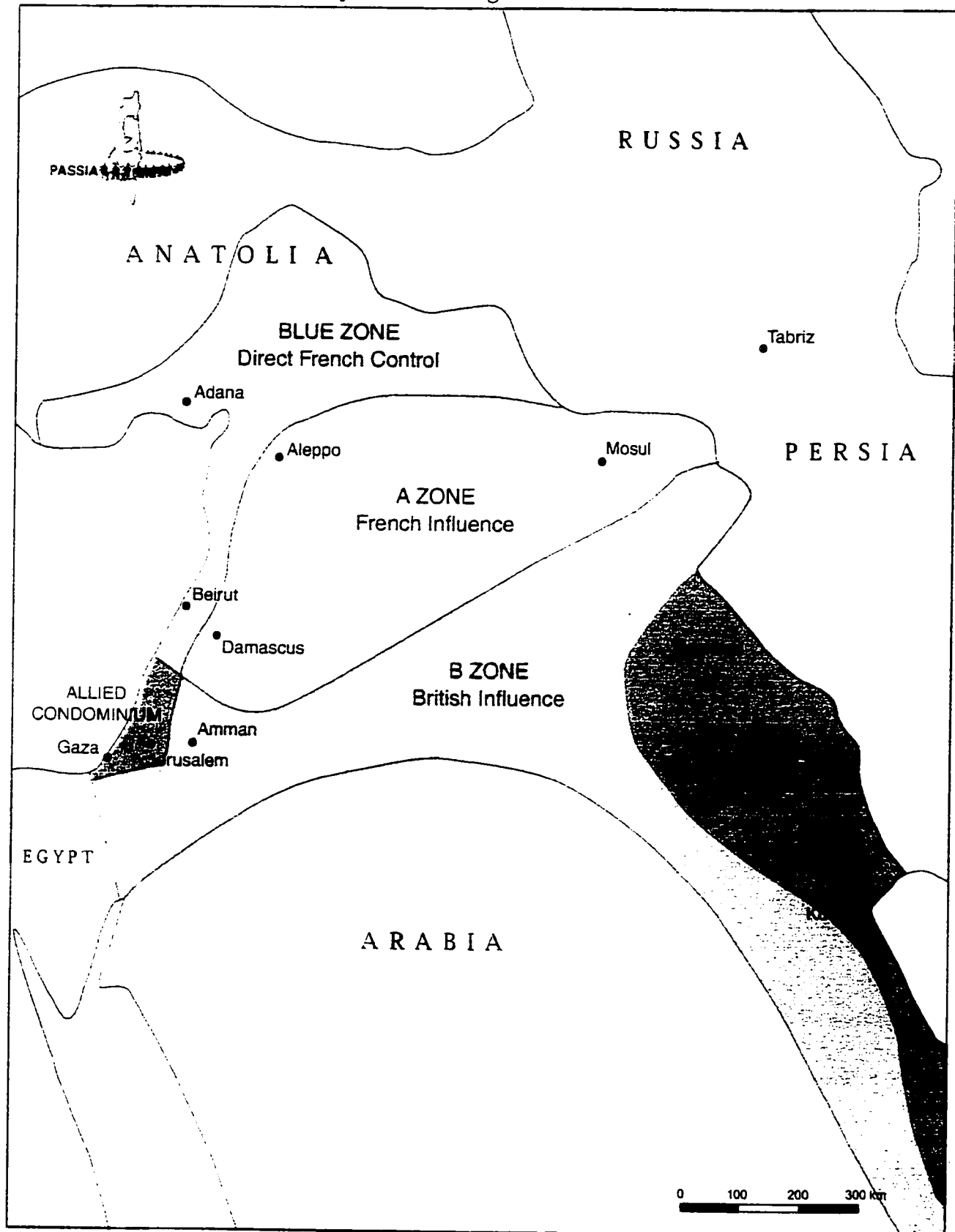
www.arij.org	Map 1, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16
www.passia.org	Map 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18
www.hdip.org	Map 19
www.palestinemonitor.org	Map 20

Map - 1



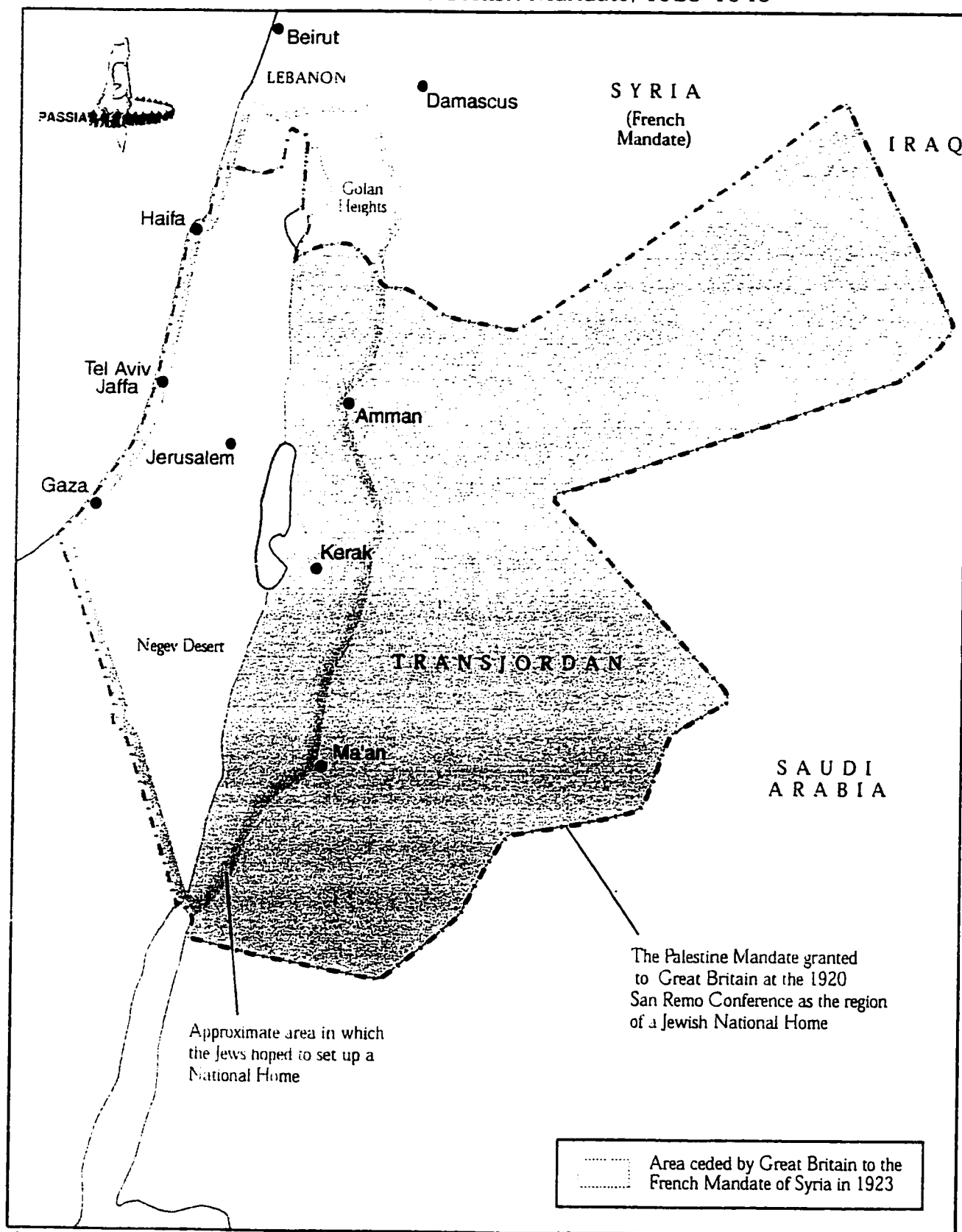
MAP - 2

Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916



MAP - 3

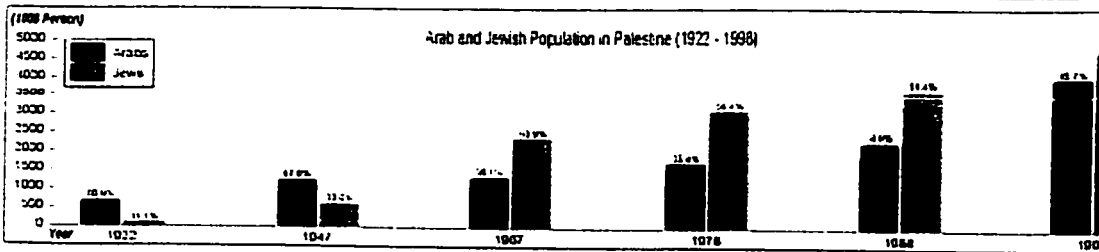
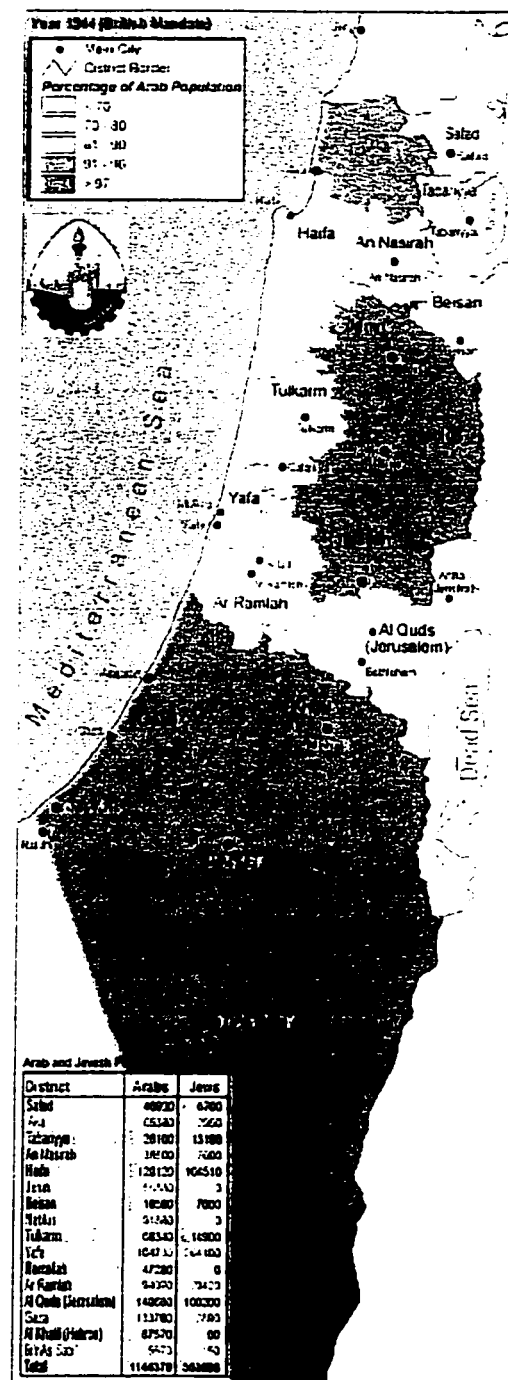
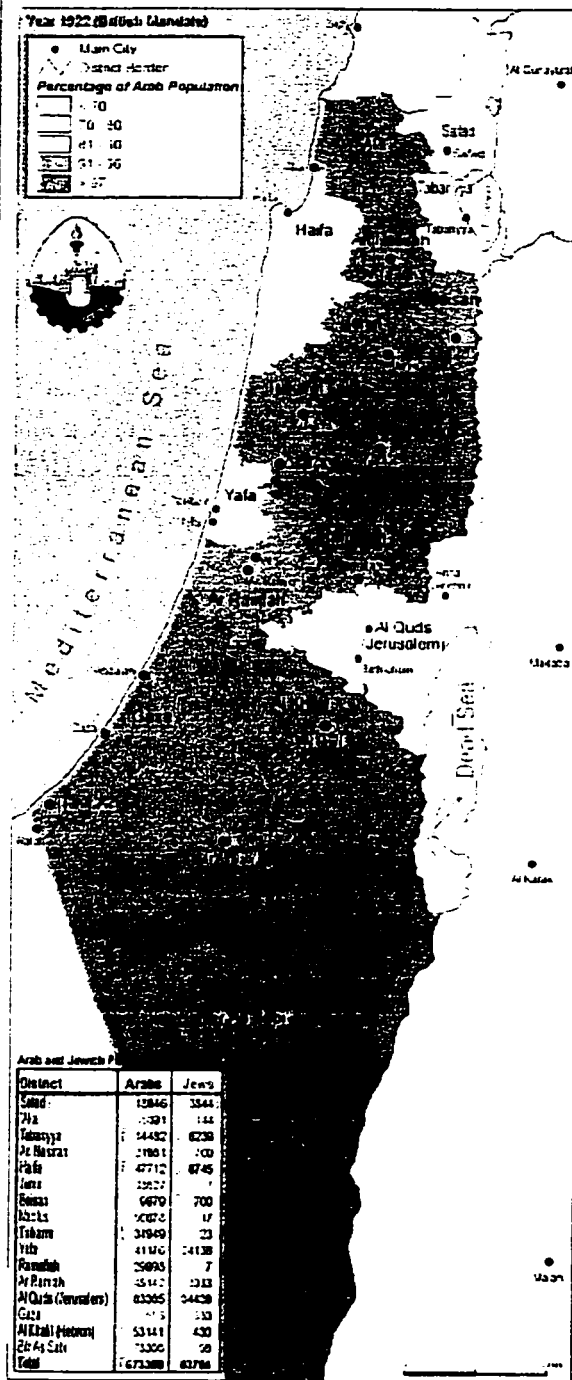
Palestine under the British Mandate, 1923-1948



MAP - 4

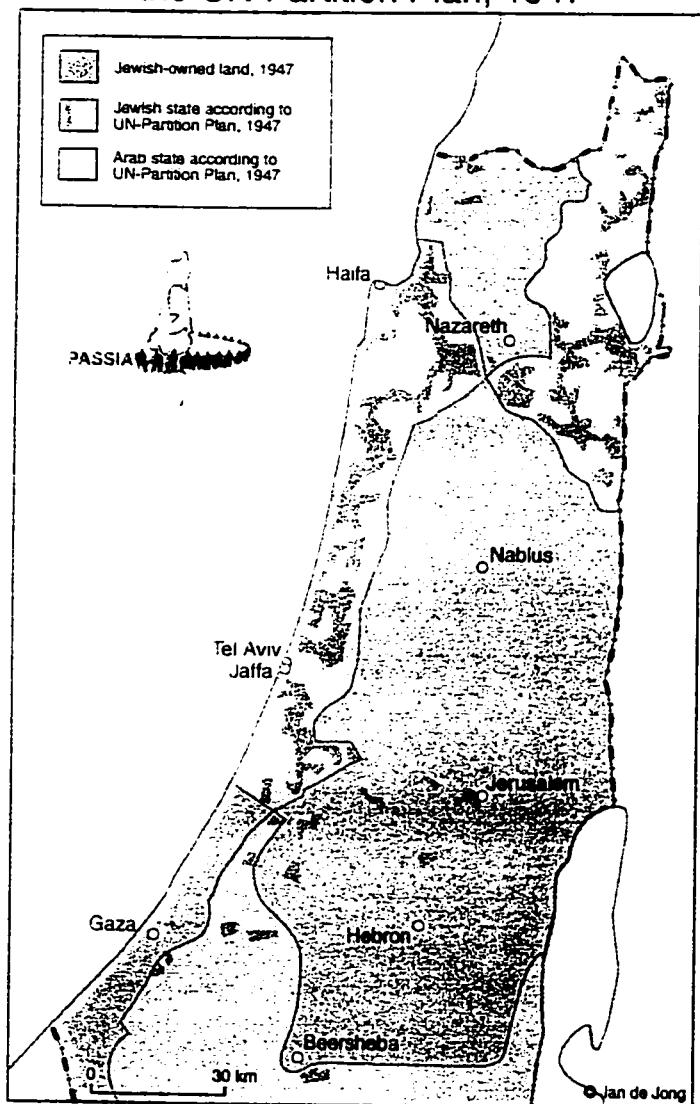
Percentage of Arab and Jewish Population by Sub-District in 1922 and 1944

كان العرب واليهود لكل قضاء عامي ١٩٢٢ و ١٩٤٤

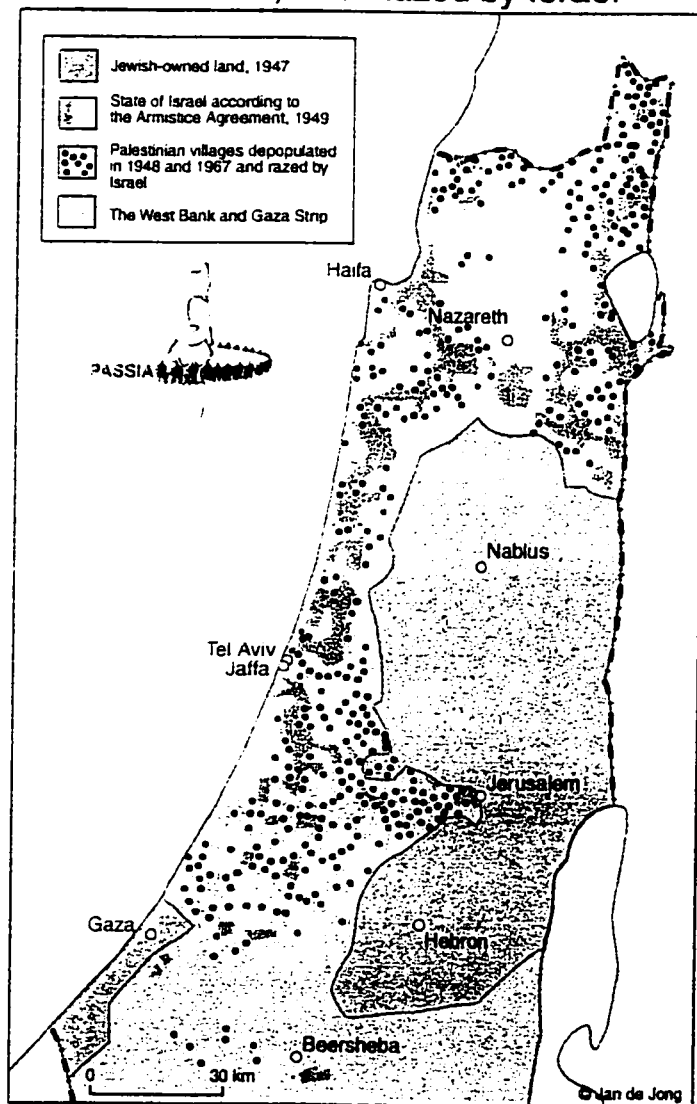


MAP - 5

Landownership in Palestine and
the UN Partition Plan, 1947

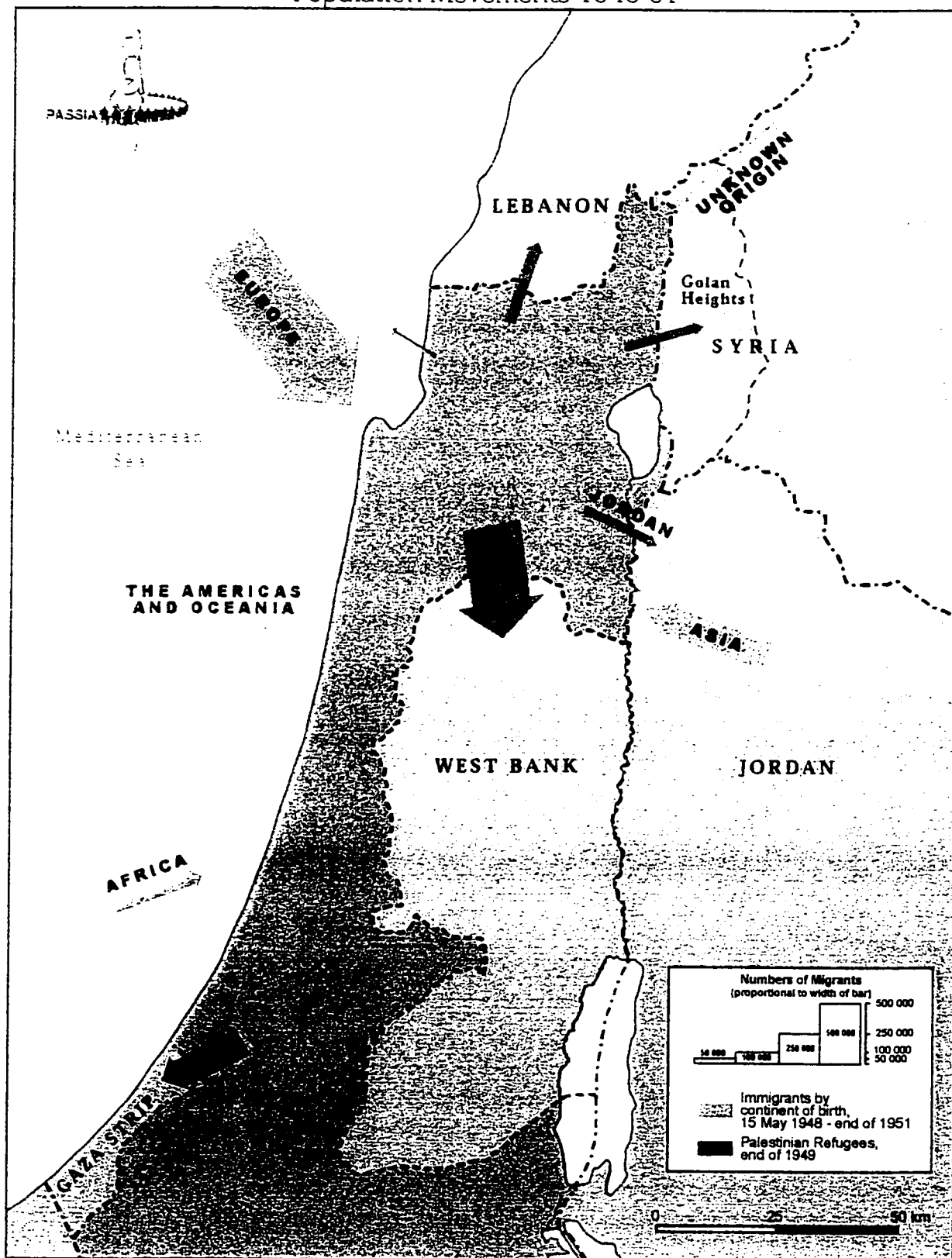


Palestinian Villages Depopulated in 1948
and 1967, and Razed by Israel

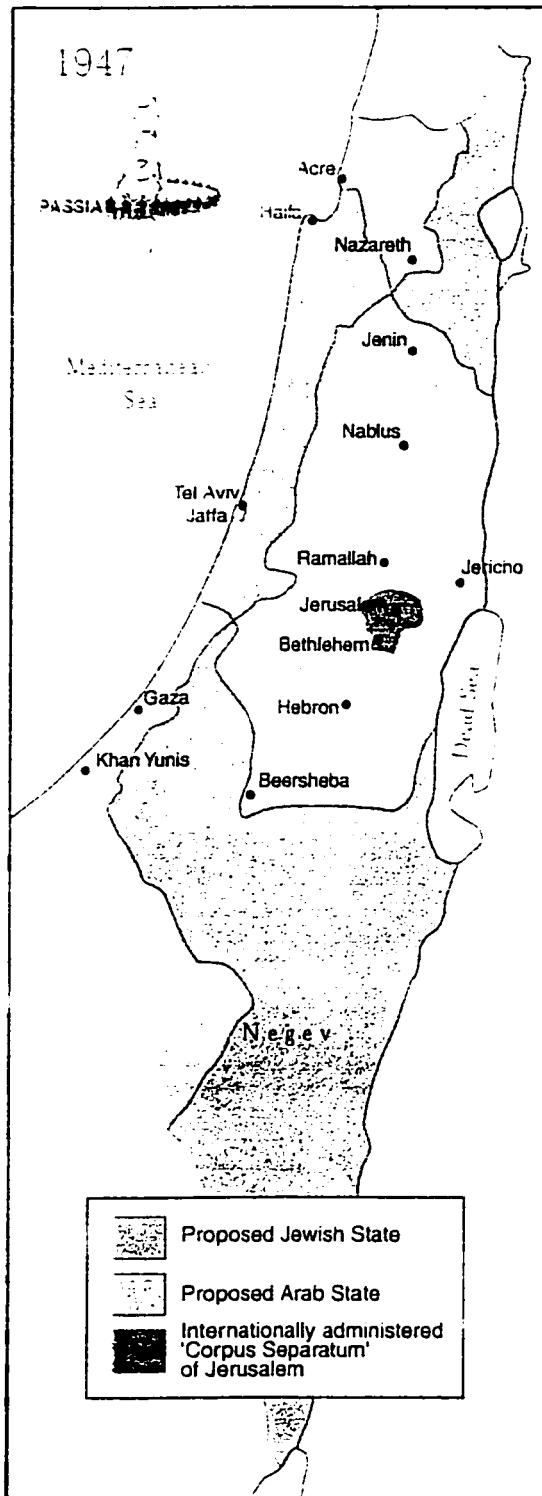


MAP - 6

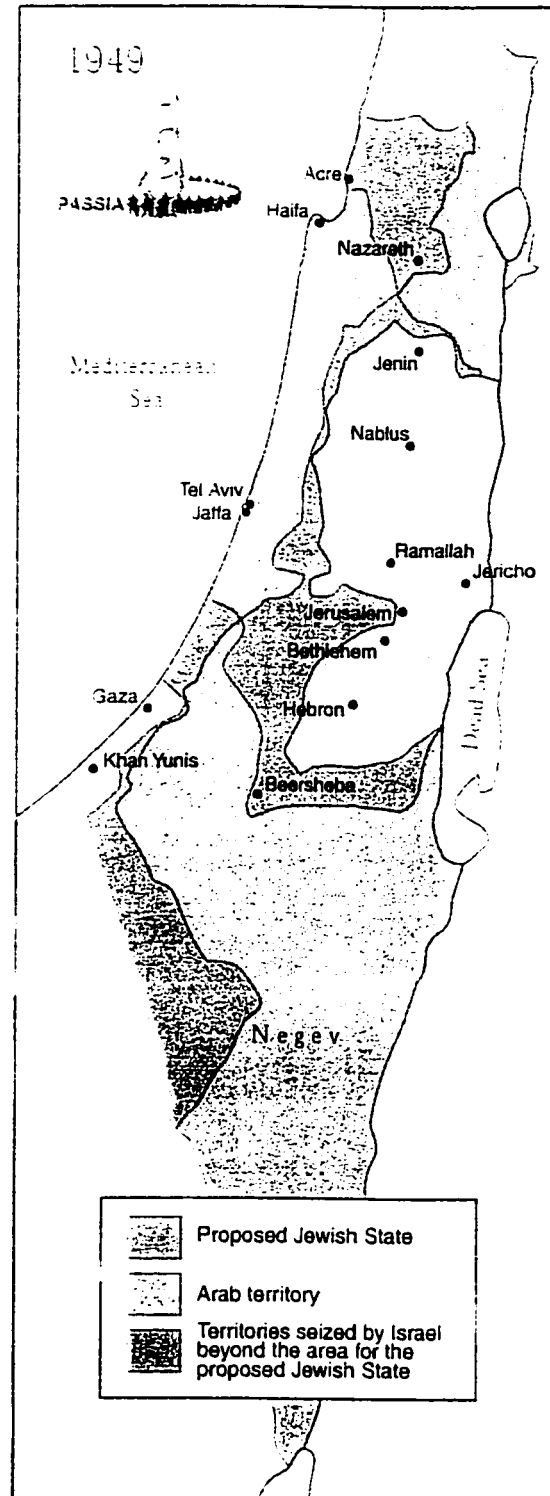
Population Movements 1948-51



MAP - 7

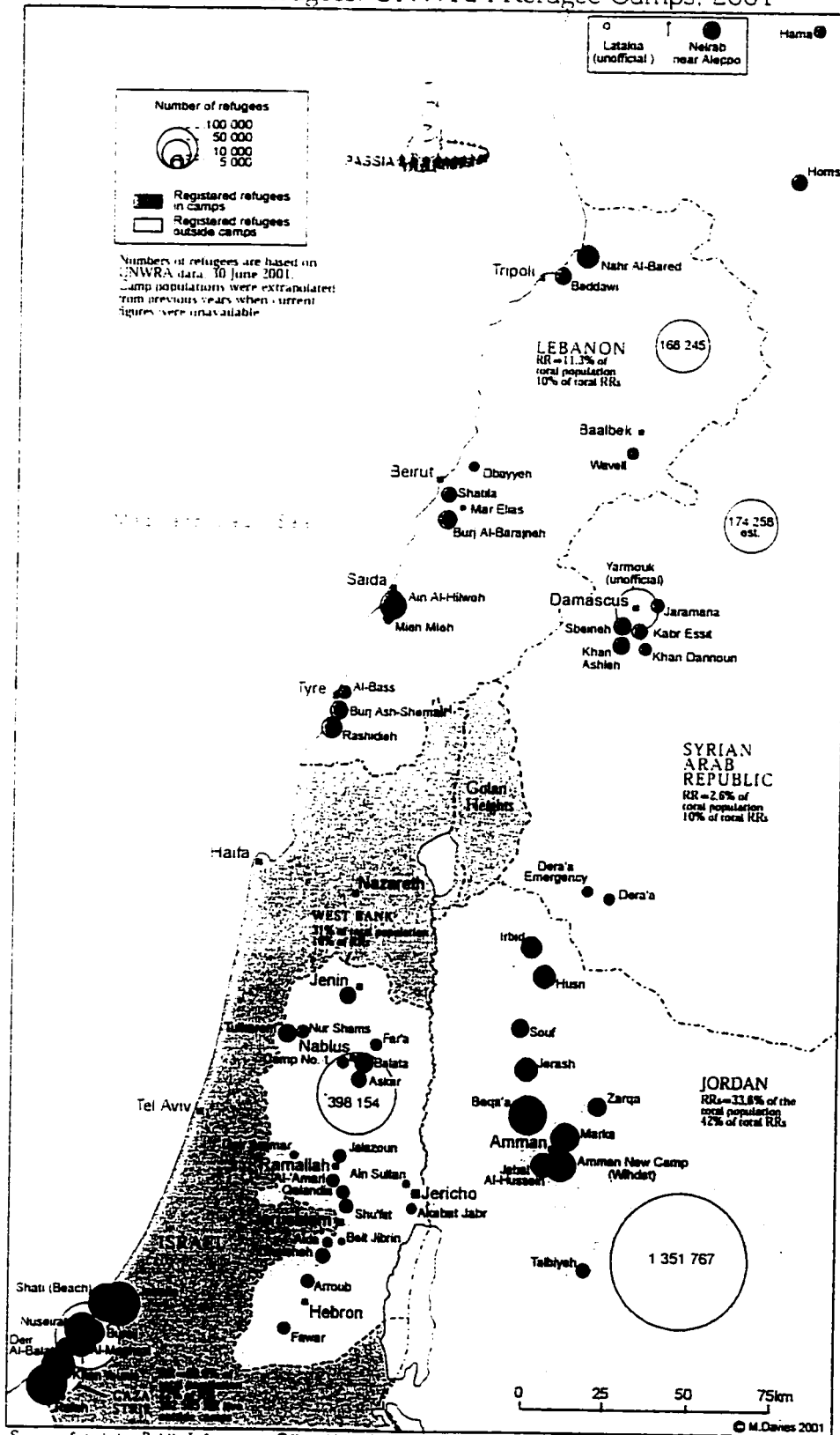
United Nations Partition Plan
UN Resolution 181

Rhodes Armistice Line



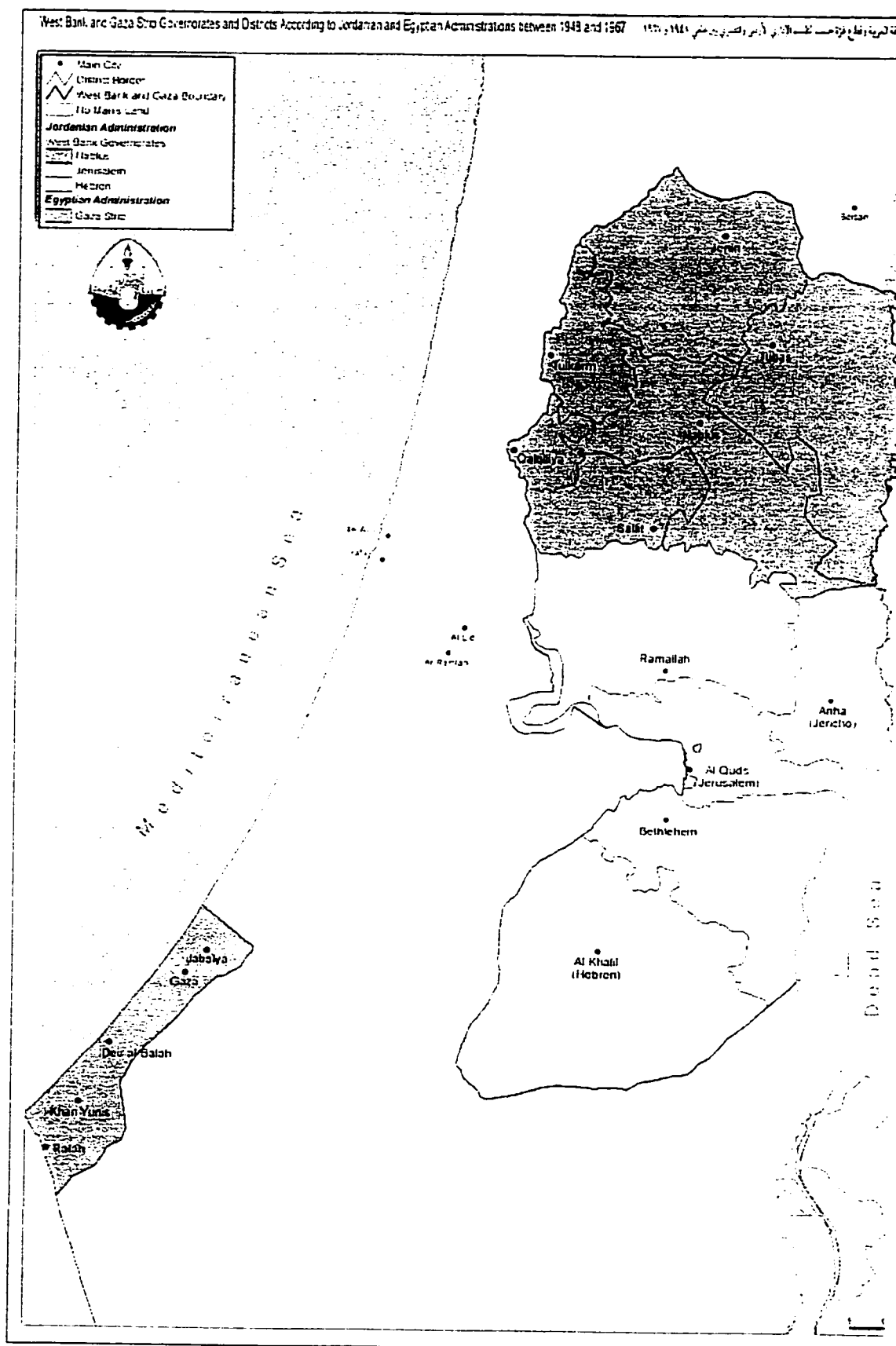
MAP - 8

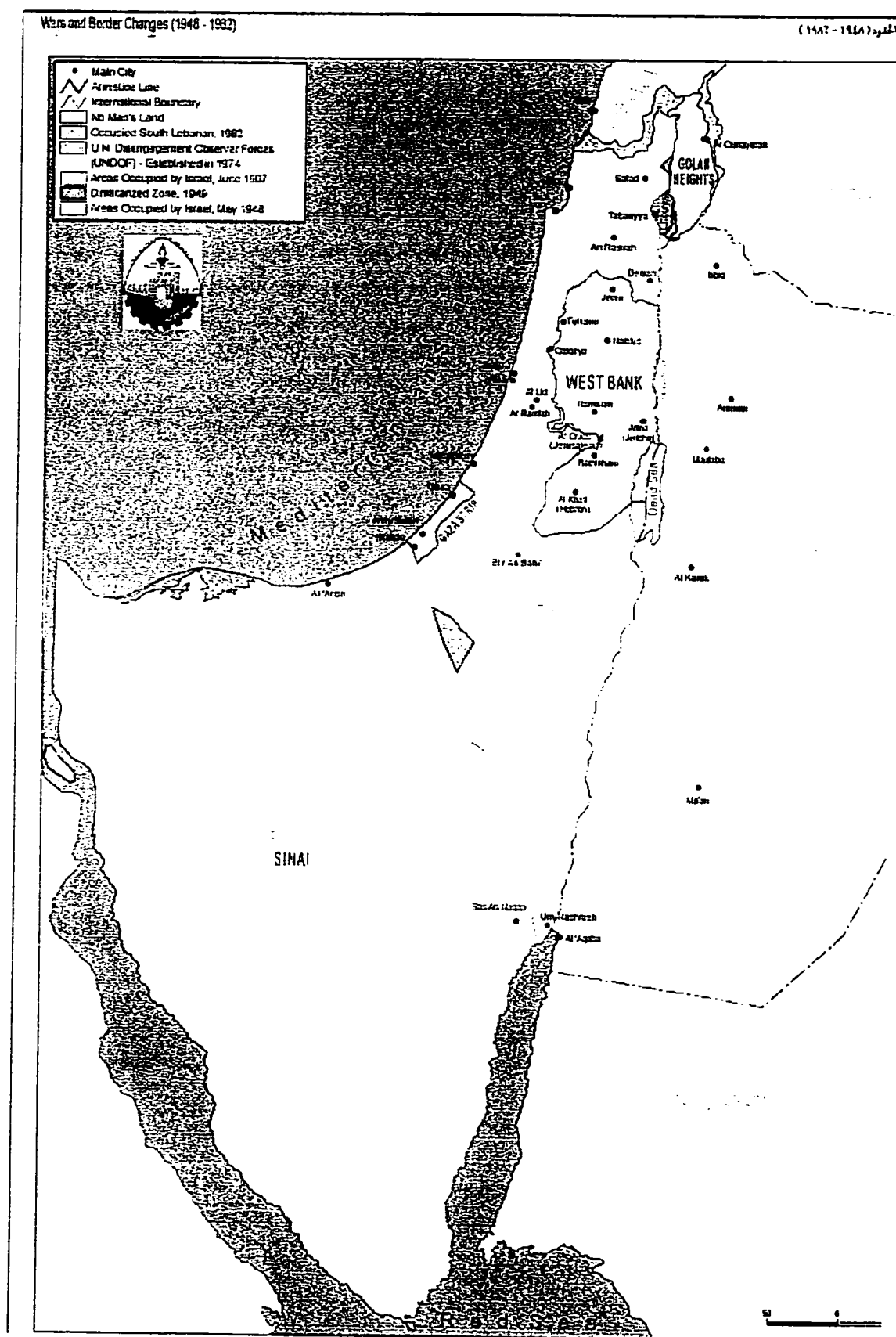
Palestinian Refugees: UNWRA Refugee Camps, 2001



MAP - 9

West Bank, and Gaza Strip Governorates and Districts According to Jordanian and Egyptian Administrations between 1948 and 1967



MAP - 10

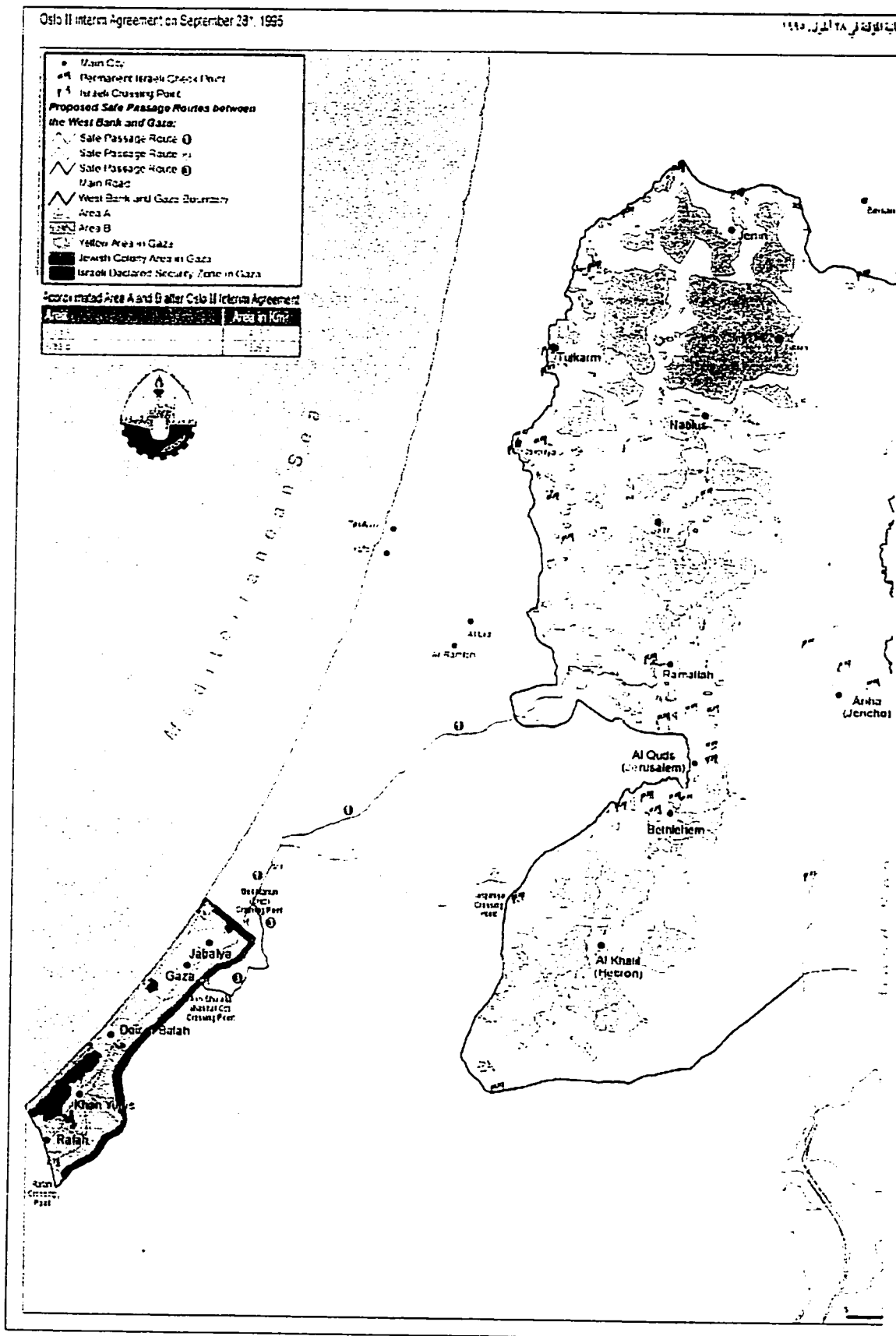
MAP - 11



MAP - 12

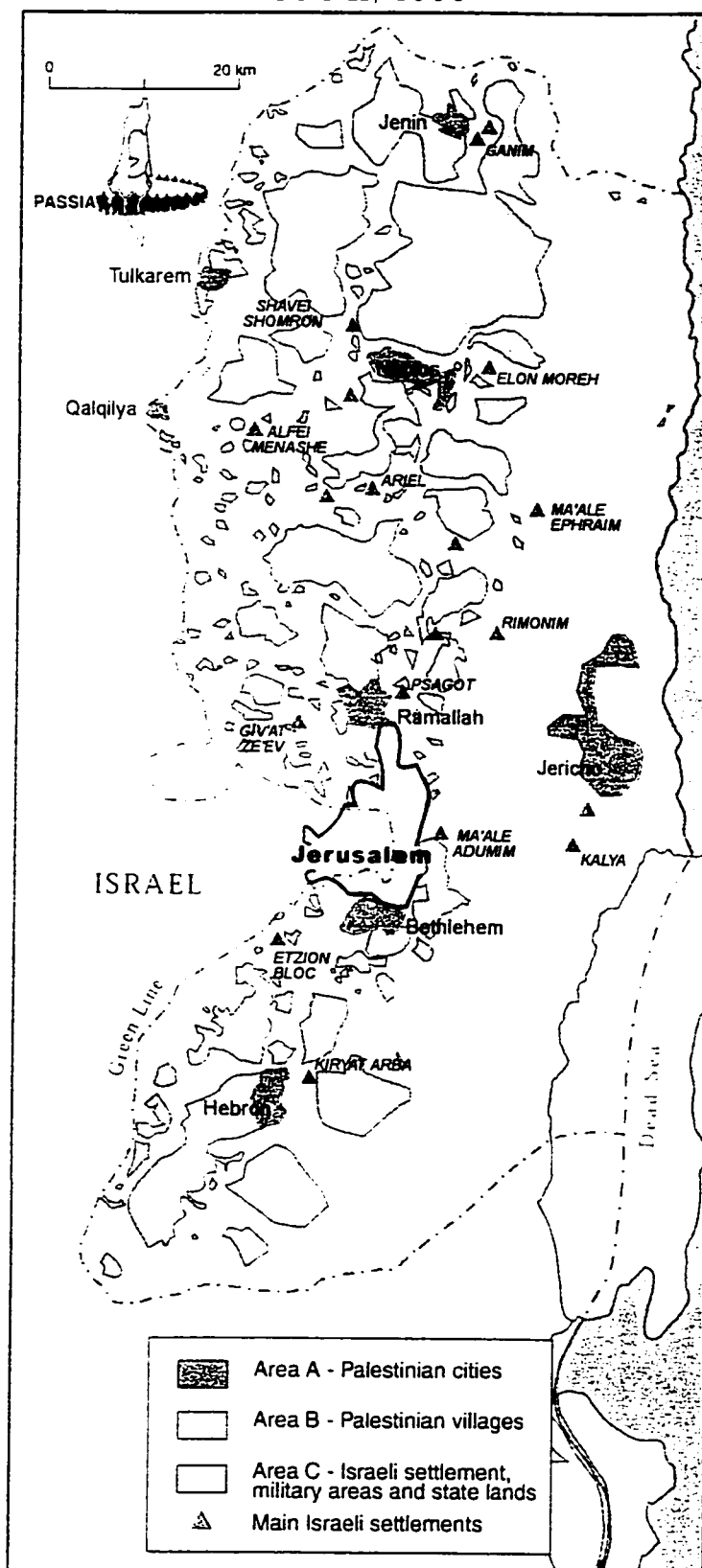
Oslo II Interim Agreement on September 23rd, 1995

خريطة المنطقة في 23 أيلول 1995



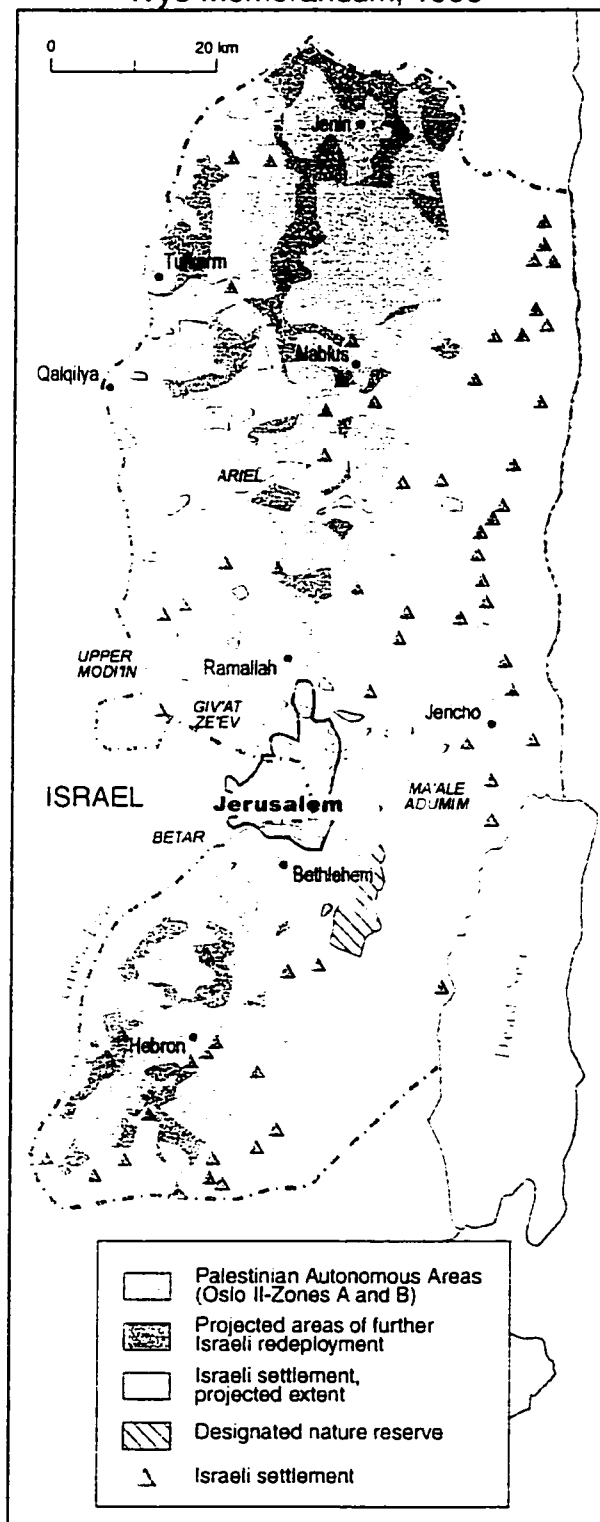
MAP - 13

Oslo II, 1995

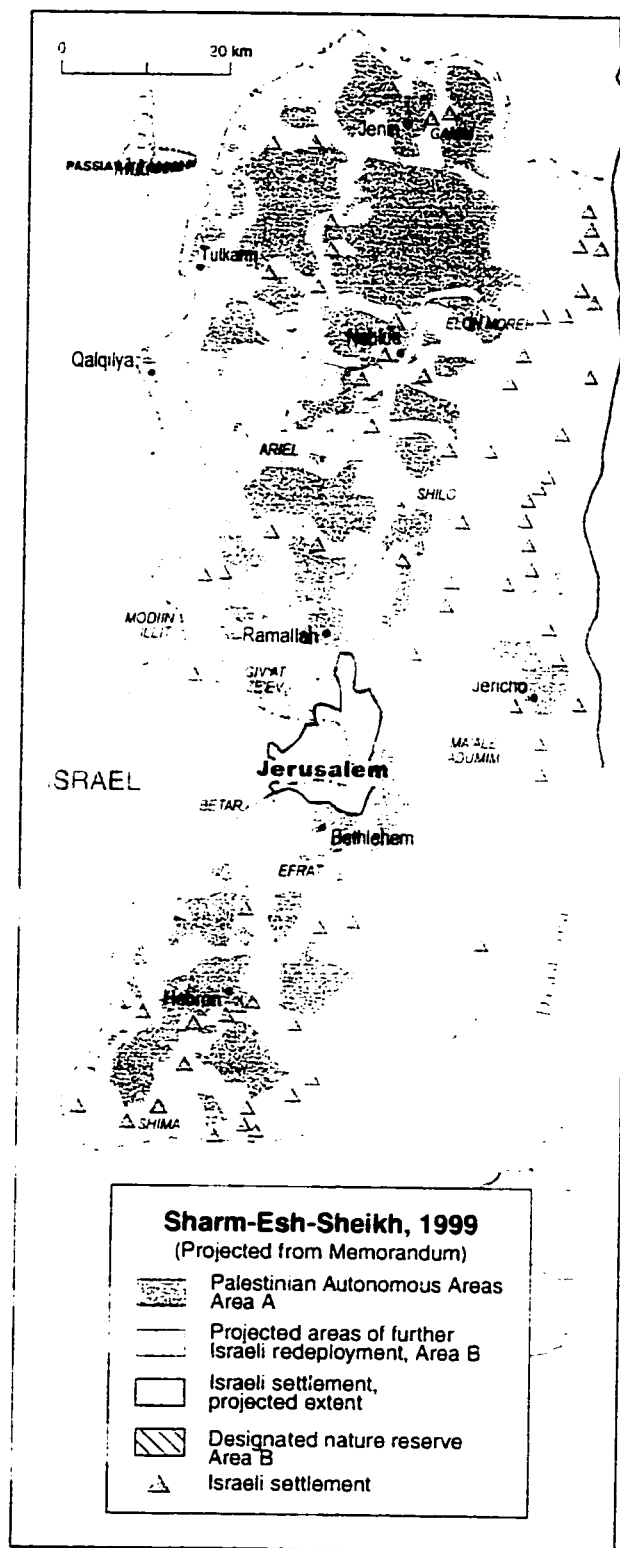


MAP - 14

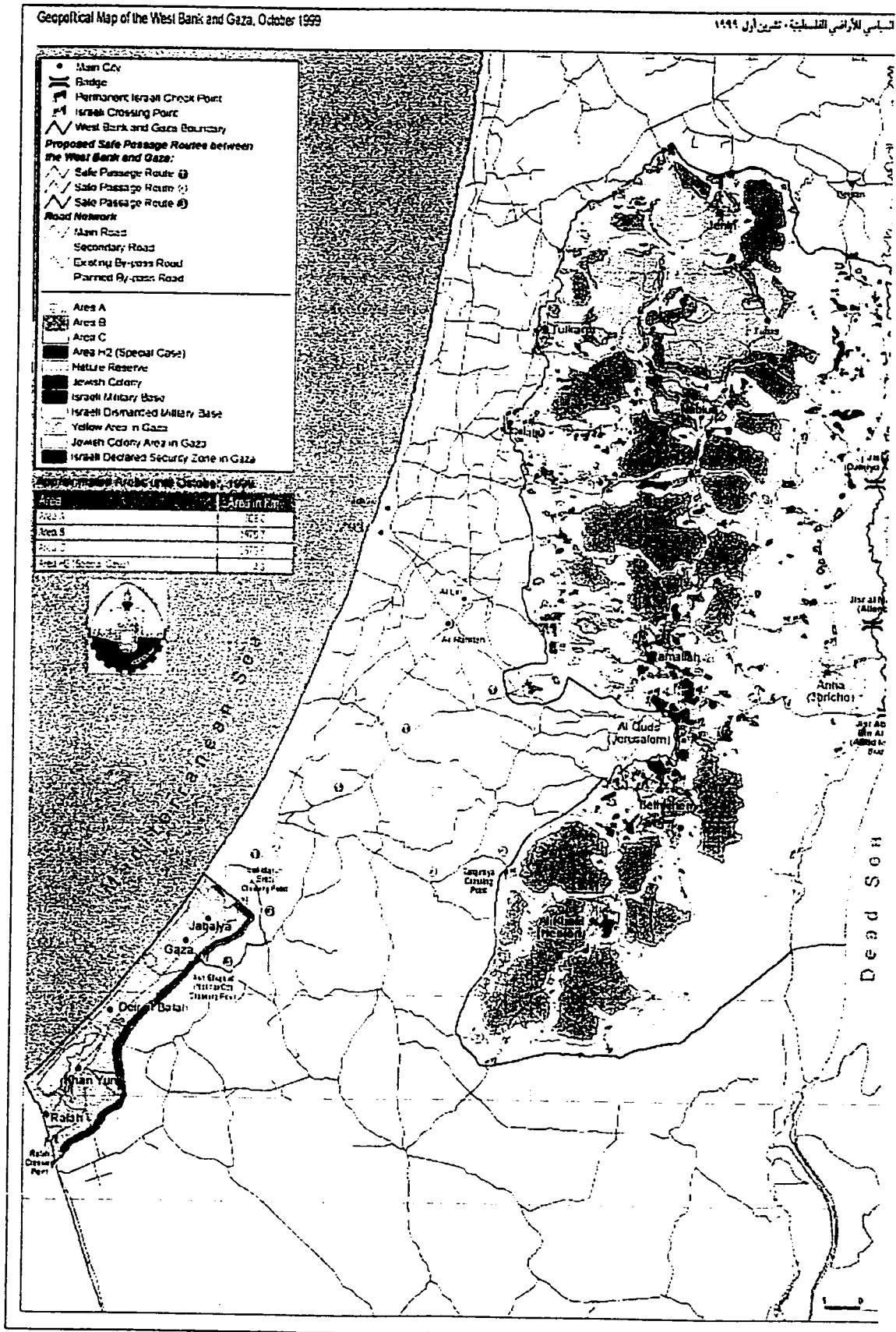
Wye Memorandum, 1998



MAP - 15

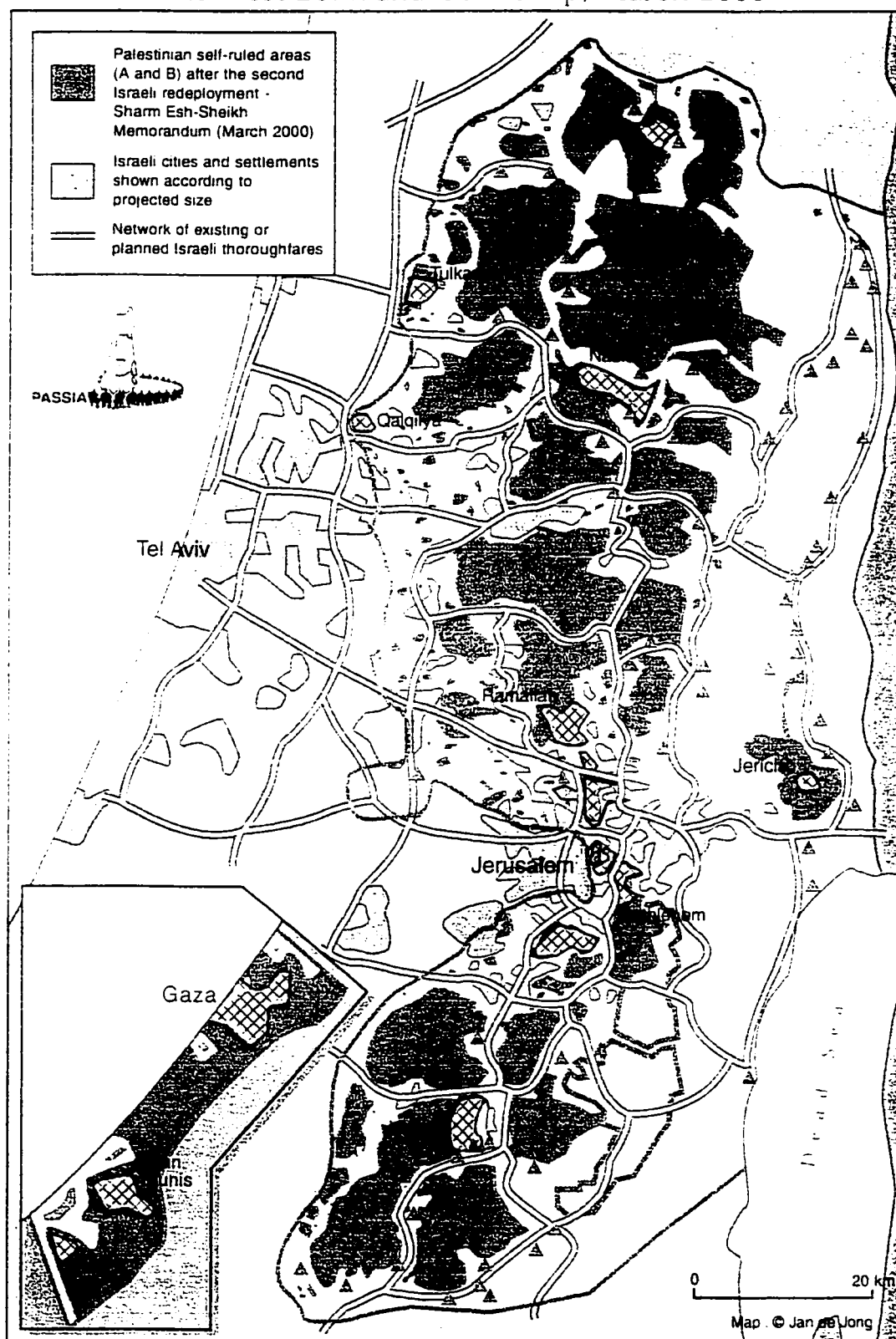


MAP - 16



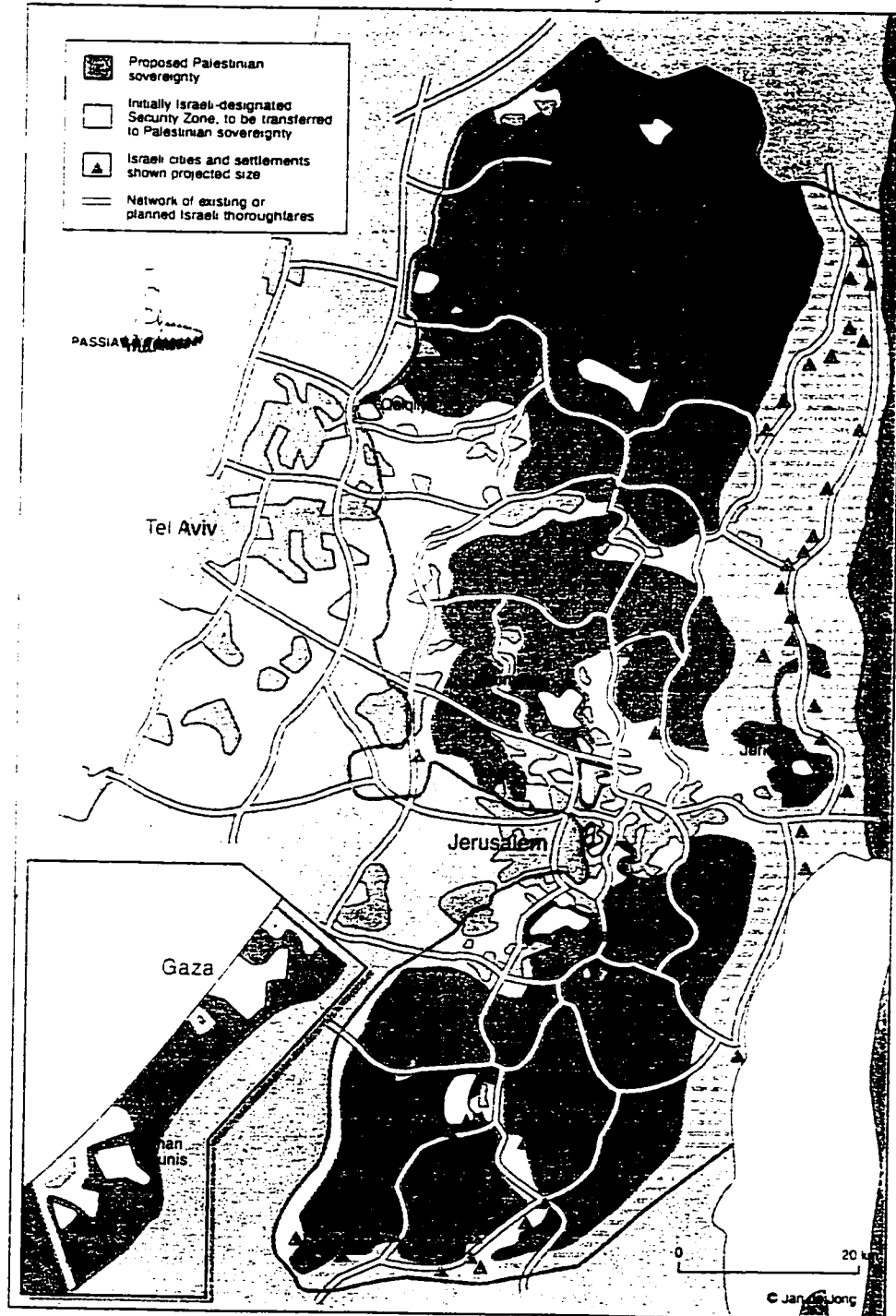
MAP - 17

The West Bank and Gaza Strip, March 2000



MAP - 18

Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map presented
by Israel, Camp David, July 2000



MAP - 19

Palestinian Bantustans in the West Bank

- X** Areas of confrontation between Israeli forces and Palestinian demonstrators are located within Palestinian populated areas. The clash sites are far from Israel proper.

- Area A** - these territories are the only areas under full Palestinian control.

Area B - the Palestinian Authority is only responsible for social and civil services.

- Israeli settlements built illegally on Palestinian-confiscated land.

- Green areas** - nature reserves, also under Israeli control.

Israel has full security control over the rest of the West Bank, except over Area A and controls all borders.

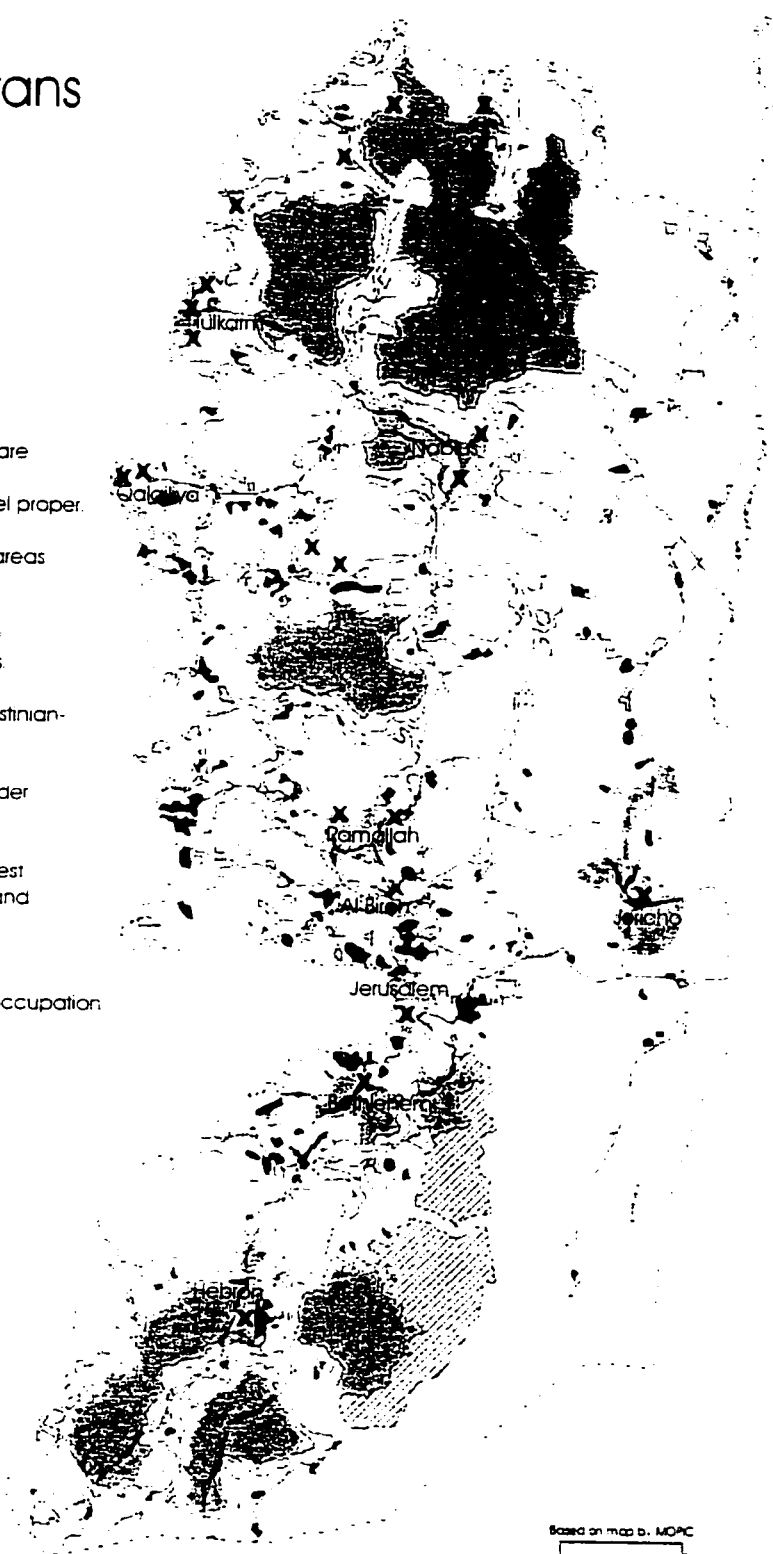
Therefore 82% of the West Bank is essentially still under full Israeli military occupation.

Mediterranean
Sea

West Bank

Israel

Gaza Strip



0 10 20 Kilometers

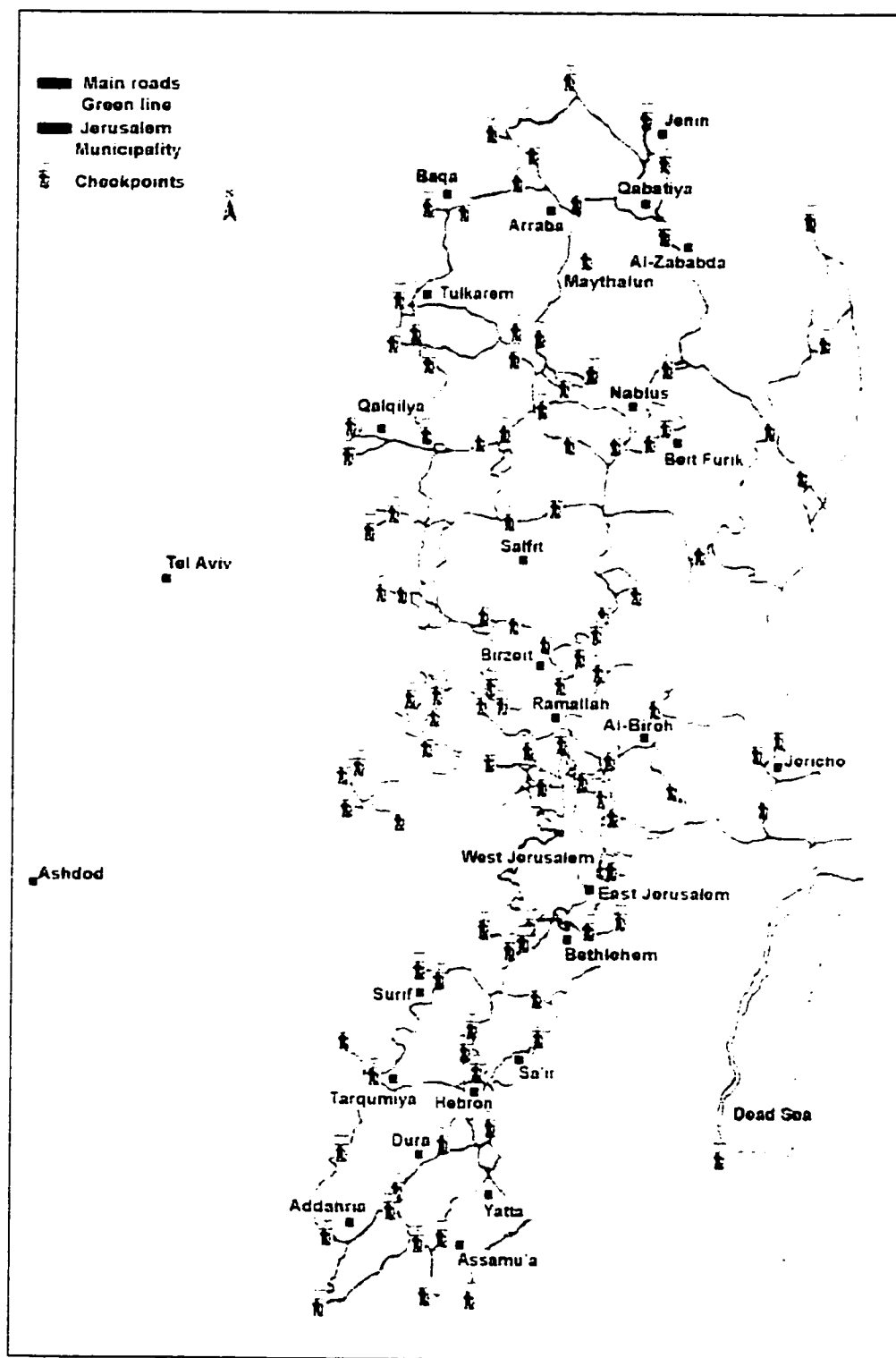
Based on map by: MOPC

hdip

1 November 2000
<http://www.hdip.org>

MAP - 20

Israeli military checkpoints in the West Bank



APPENDIX II

TABLES

- 2.1 Five Thousand Years of Palestinian History (www.arij.org)
- 2.2 Names of Depopulated Palestinian Villages in 1948 and 1967 (www.arij.org)
- 2.3 PLO and PA (www.passia.org)
- 2.4 Overall Framework for the Interim Period and Palestinian Self-Government
(www.passia.org)

TABLE - 1

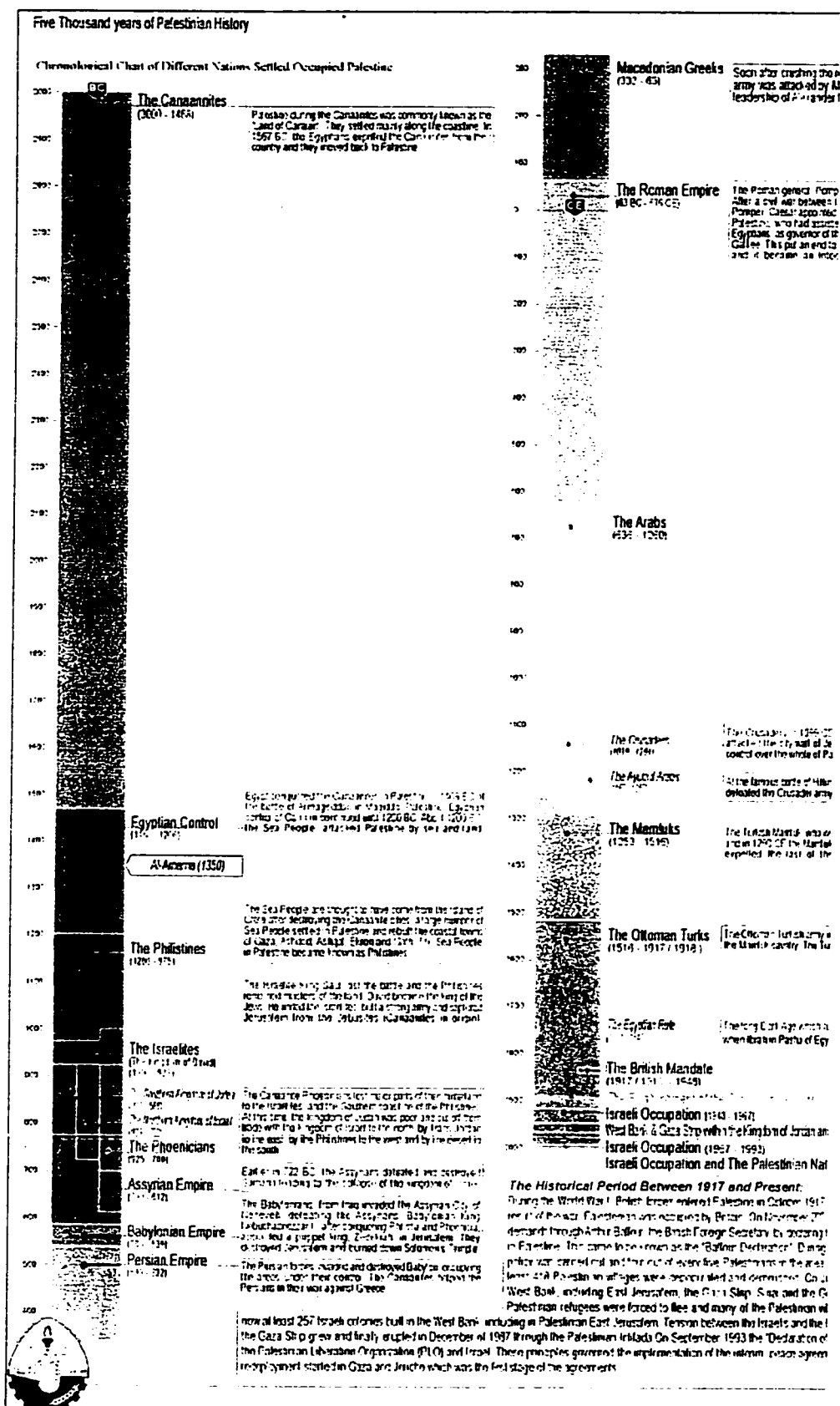


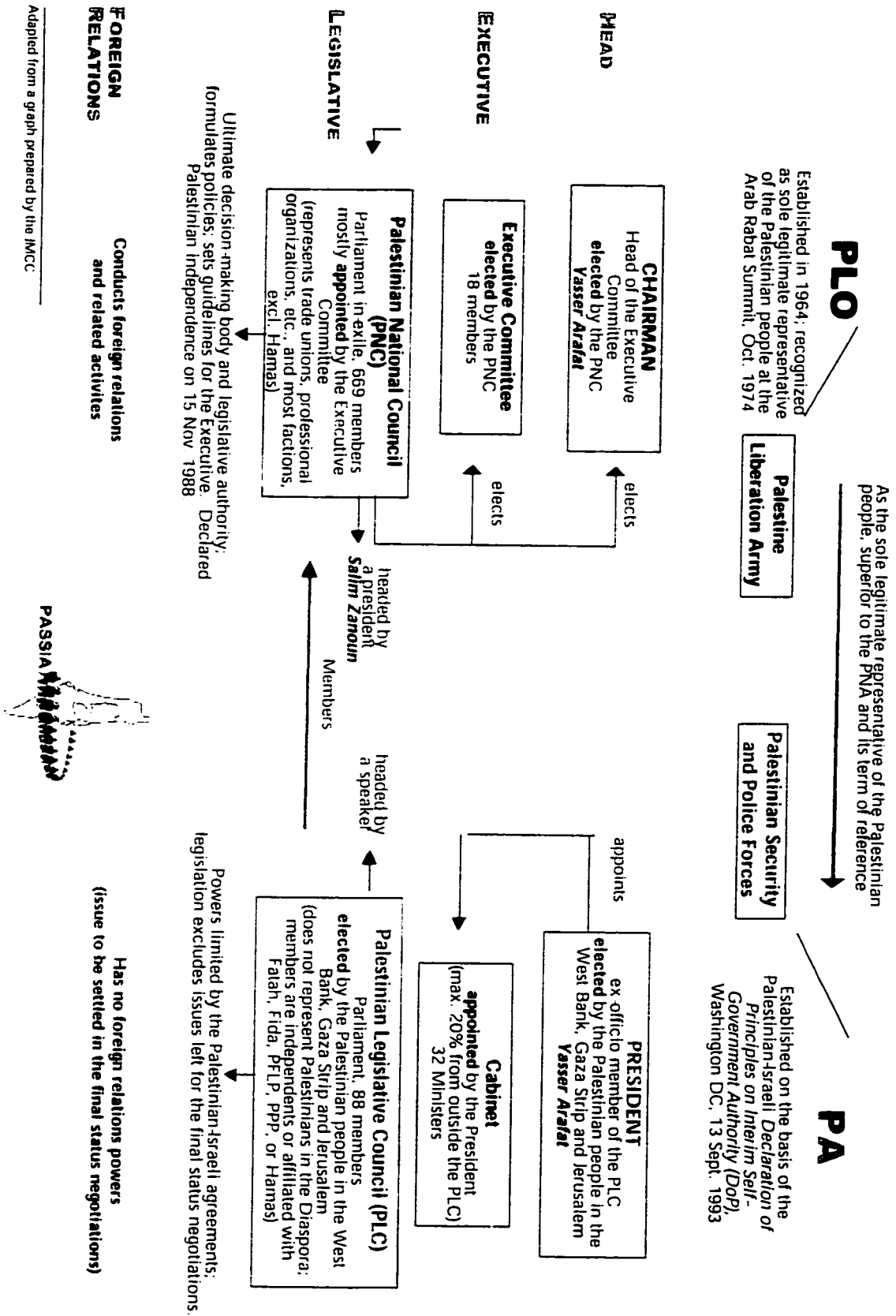
TABLE - 2

Names of the Depopulated Palestinian Villages in 1945 and 1967

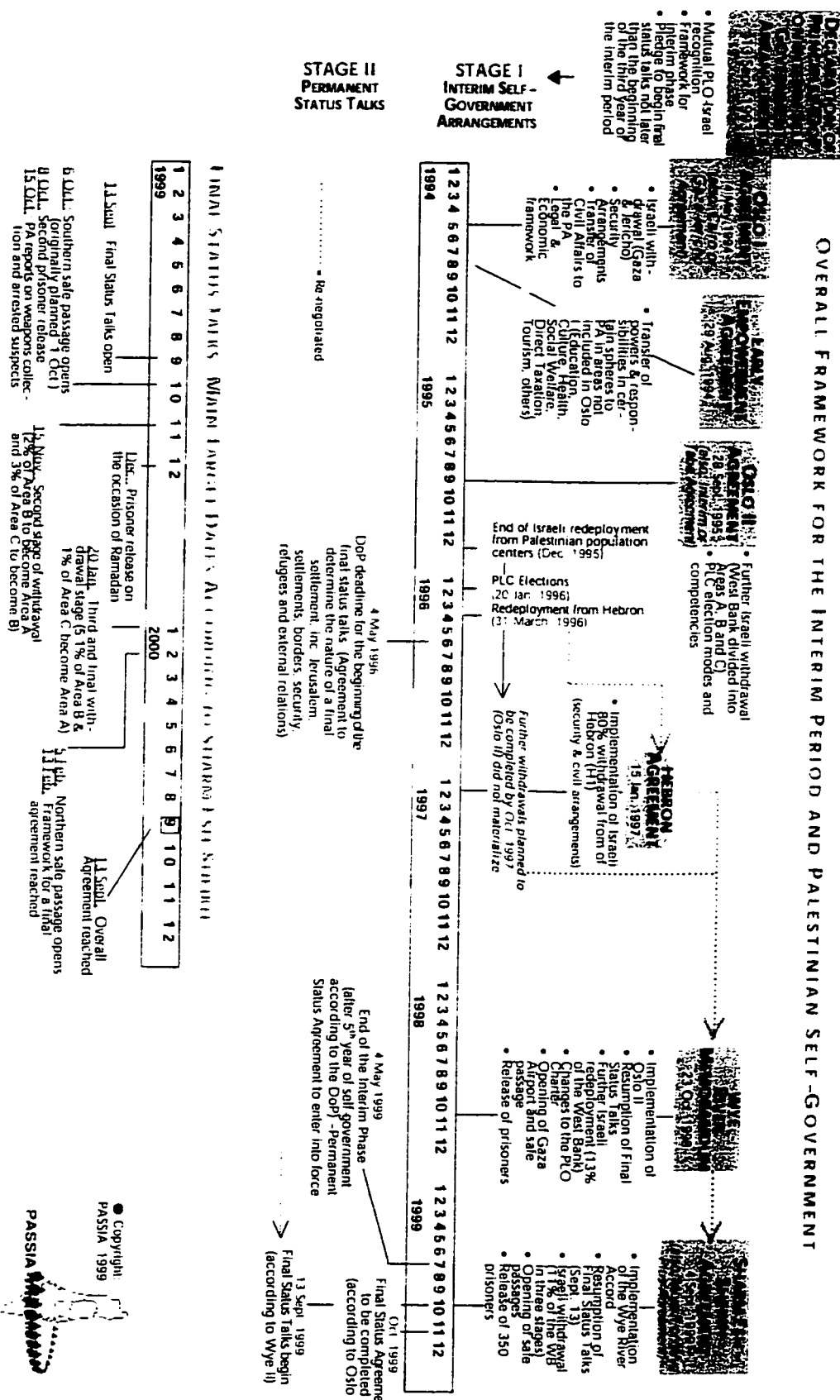
اسموية القرى الفلسطينية عامي 1945 و 1967

No.	Village Name	No.	Village Name	No.	Village Name	No.	Village Name	No.	Village Name
1	Atil al-Qanah	88	Al-Zakariyya al-Tahla	175	Al-Ghubayya al-Farqa	262	Dayr Terf	349	Dayr al-Shayth
2	At-Zuq al-Fawqani	89	Akbasa	176	Al-Marsi	263	Al-Sanayya	350	Ras Abu 'Anmar
3	Al-Sanbariyya	90	Al-Zaaghariyya	177	Al-Lajun	264	Bayt Nabata	351	Al-Qabu
4	Sharika al-Tahla	91	Jubb Yusuf	178	Al-Kufayn	265	Al-Haditha	352	Dayr al-Hawa
5	Khan al-Durayr	92	Al-Qudaymya	179	Sabbam	266	Dayr Abu Salama	353	Bayt Tlab
6	Al-Manshiyya	93	Al-Shuna	180	Al-Bukayma	267	Sarafad al-'Amar	354	'Alkar
7	Khusas	94	Al-Faradiyya	181	Khubbayza	268	Al-Duhaymya, Khirbat	355	Al-Tannur, Khirbat
8	At-Zuq al-Tahtani	95	Kafir Iman	182	Umm al-Sharif	269	Danhyal	356	Sulfa
9	Humr	96	Al-Manshiyya	183	Al-Sindiyya	270	Jimzu	357	Dayr Aban
10	Al-Khalisa	97	Karraza Khirbat	184	Burayka	271	Zakariyya, Khirbat	358	Jarash
11	Al-Mansura	98	Al-Bulayha	185	Kabara	272	Shula	359	Al-Burayj
12	Lazzaza	99	Arab al-Shamalina	186	Al-Shuna Khirbat	273	Al-Berj	360	Zakariyya
13	Madahil	100	Al-Samakiyya	187	Jabbal	274	Barliya	361	Mughallis
14	Al-'Abasiyya	101	Yaquc	188	Al-Kurassas	275	Khamiba	362	Idnibin
15	Qayitriyya	102	Al-Mansura	189	Qumya	276	Imnaba	363	Al-Tina
16	Al-Malwa	103	Al-Birwa	190	Z'in	277	Br Ma'in	364	Al-Masmya al-
17	Al-Dawwana	104	Al-Tabgha	191	Huris	278	Al-Kunayyisa	365	Qastira
18	Al-Sakhiyya	105	Wiar	192	Al-Mazar	279	Abu al-Fadi	366	Tal al-Tumus
19	Al-Hamra	106	Al-Damin	193	Zaba	280	Br Salm	367	Bayt Daras
20	Al-Mukathira	107	Al-Ruways	194	Al-Hamidiyya	281	Sarafad al-Kharab	368	Al-Sawafir al-Shi
21	Al-Zawiya	108	Ghusayyatu Shusha	195	Arab al-Barrah	282	Wadi Hunayn	369	Al-Sawafir al-G
22	Al-Bunayyira	109	Al-Wara al-Sawda Khirbat	196	Al-Sakhna	283	Al-Nab' Rubur	370	Al-Sawafir al-sha
23	Kharyam al-Walid	110	Wadi al-Hamam	197	Tal al-shawk	284	Al-Qubayba	371	Al-Jalidiyya
24	Jahula	111	Al-Mada	198	Al-Ghazzariyya	285	Zarnuqa	372	R'in
25	Shuraba	112	Hidin	199	Al-Ashrafiyya	286	Ybna	373	Tal al-Safi
26	Al-Nabi Yusha	113	Nemr	200	Al-Jarfa Khirbat	287	'Aqi	374	Bayt Natid
27	Qadas	114	Ma'ara al-Sams	201	Qannu	288	Al-Na'ani	375	'Ajur
28	Mal'ayya	115	Al-Basayr, Khirbat	202	Al-Bun Khirbat	289	Al-Bamiyya	376	Dayr al-Qabban
29	Al-Urayfiyya	116	Harsha	203	Samar Qasarya	290	Al-Qubab	377	R'ina
30	Al-Qubaybiyya	117	Lubya	204	Qasarya	291	Bayt Shanna	378	Baqusya
31	Baysamin	118	Al-Nuqayb	205	Wadi Ana	292	Sabir	379	Zikri
32	Ma'faha	119	Nasr al-Dur	206	Umm 'Aya	293	Al-Bunayra, Khirbat	380	Sumail
33	Hamra	120	Al-Shayra	207	Nasir al-Jul	294	Aynul	381	Jusayr
34	Arab al-Zubayd	121	Salfuniyya	208	Farwana	295	Nidal	382	Tbfis
35	Al-Ulmaniyya	122	Sa'sa, Khirbat	209	Arab al-'Anda	296	Bayt Thul	383	Julis
36	Dayshum	123	Balad al-Shaykh	210	Al-Samiyya	297	Dayr Ayyub	384	Hamama
37	Safha	124	Al-'Ira	211	'Arab al-Sala	298	Al-Latun	385	Al-Jura
38	Sunut	125	Yapur	212	Al-Hamra	299	Abu Shusha	386	Al-Khris
39	Tarikhha	126	Kafir Sabi	213	Al-Khmayzr	300	Saydun	387	Nidra
40	Al-Nabi Rubur	127	Al-Manara	214	Al-Fatur	301	Al-Mansura	388	Brayt 'Alfa
41	'Aqir	128	Al-Samra	215	'Arab Zahart al-Dumayn	302	Al-Maghar	389	Iraq Suraydan
42	Ibbin Khirbat	129	Samakh	216	'Arab al-Fuqara	303	Bashshid	390	Hatta
43	Al-Bessa	130	Al-Hamra	217	Al-Saras, Khirbat	304	Qatra	391	Karatiyya
44	Arab al-Samiyya	131	Al-Manshiyya	218	Rami Zayta	305	Shahara	392	Zayta
45	Al-Zib	132	Al-Ubaydiyya	219	'Arab al-'Ayyat	306	Umm Kafha	393	Kudna
46	Al-Mansura	133	Ma'dhar	220	Wadi al-Hawarith	307	khulfa	394	Umm Bun, Khirbat
47	Kafir Burim	134	Al-Damin, Khirbat	221	Zalafa, Khirbat	308	Dayr Mithayn	395	Dayr Nakhkhas
48	Fara	135	Al-Jalima	222	Al-Majdal Khirbat	309	Bayt Sir	396	Bayt Jitri
49	Ahna	136	Ma'lul	223	Al-Manshiyya	310	Bayt Sisin	397	Al-Falaj
50	Tubayl	137	'Ayn Harud	224	Al-Jalama	311	Bayt Far Khirbat	398	Kawakaba
51	Al-Husayniyya	138	'Alit	225	Ozgun	312	Al-Mukhayzin	399	Dayr Tima
52	Al-Ras al-Ahmar	139	Al-Mazar	226	Wadi Qabbana	313	'Arab Sunir	400	Al-Jayra
53	Sa'sa	140	Al-Mansura, Khirbat	227	Umm Khald	314	Barga	401	Barbara
54	Dayr al-Qusi	141	Al-Majaydi	228	Bayt Lul, Khirbat	315	Istud	402	Harbiya
55	Al-Kabri	142	Hadaiha	229	Barayal Hamra	316	Al-Batana al-Gharbi	403	Bayt Jirp
56	Al-Nahr	143	Al-Dahmaysa	230	Ghabat Kafir Sur	317	Al-Batana al-Sharqi	404	Hulayqat
57	Al-Ghabriyya	144	'Ardam	231	Fardaya	318	Yasur	405	Iraq al-Manshiyya
58	Al-Tal	145	Sinn	232	Al-Zababda Khirbat	319	Al-Masmya al-Katira	406	Al-Qubayba
59	Umm al-Faraj	146	Al-'Ira	233	Misra	320	Al-Khayma	407	Al-Darayma
60	Jiddin Khirbat	147	Al-Tana Khirbat	234	Kafir Sabi	321	Jiya	408	Burayj
61	Selima	148	Al-Bira	235	Tabsur	322	Qazaza	409	Simsim
62	Saba'an	149	Danna	236	Al-Haram	323	Sajad	410	Dayr Sunayd
63	Ghabatniyya	150	Indur	237	Ijl al-Shamaliyya	324	Isma'illah, Khirbat	411	Dimra
64	Safsa'	151	Jabai	238	Ijl al-Qubaybiyya	325	Dayr Rafar	412	Najd
65	Iytaba	152	Al-Sarafand	239	Byra 'Adas	326	Sar'a	413	Haj
66	Da'falo	153	Izim	240	Al-Muwayyin	327	'Isin	414	Al-Jammama
67	Meras	154	Al-Manara, Khirbat	241	Abu Kishik	328	Anef	415	Kawakha
68	Krad al-Ghannama	155	Kafir Iman	242	Al-Sarima	329	Isma'	416	Al-Muharraga
69	Krad al-Baqara	156	'Ayn Ghtzal	243	Al-Shaykh Mirwanas	330	Bayt Mahsir	417	Al-Imara
70	Yarda	157	Al-Sawamir	244	Al-Kun	331	Sans	418	Al-Khalasa
71	Al-Wayziyya	158	Qumtaza, Khirbat	245	Faga	332	Al-Umm, Khirbat	419	Bad Huba
72	Amnupa	159	Umm al-Zina	246	Al-Jammam al-Sharq	333	Bayt Naquta	420	Yalo
73	Qabbala	160	Qira	247	Jansha	334	Al-Qasbi	421	Emras
74	Qadha	161	Abu Zurayq	248	Al-Jammam al-Gharbi	335	Qahmya		
75	Firim	162	Al-Rihanliyya	249	Al-Mas'udyya	336	I'da		
76	Mughla al-Khul	163	Abu Shusha	250	Majdal Yabu	337	Dayr Yasin		
77	Al-Qudat	164	Lul, Khirbat	251	Al-Muzanfa	338	Suba		
78	Mansura al-Khayr	165	Kafra	252	Qub	339	Dayr Amir		
79	Al-Munira Khirbat	166	Kwlab al-Hamra	253	Ramla	340	Bayt Umm al-Mays		
80	Al-Jalima	167	Al-Zawya Khirbat	254	Al-'Abasiyya	341	Kasla		
81	Ernya	168	Umm Sabana, Khirbat	255	Saqya	342	Al-Lawz, Khirbat		
82	Ayn al-Zayun	169	Yetta	256	Sabma	343	Satal		
83	Miran	170	Ayn al-Mansi	257	Al-Khaymya	344	'Ayn Karm		
84	Anqa	171	Al-Naghmaghiyya	258	Yazur	345	Al-Mafha		
85	Kuraykal	172	Al-Ghubayya al-Tahla	259	Kafir Ana	346	Al-Jura		
86	Al-Sumayriyya	173	Dayr al-Ramha	260	Al-'Ira	347	Al-Watqa		
87	Al-Sammul	174	Al-Tanura	261	Bayt Dajan	348	'Aqur		

TABLE - 3



OVERALL FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD AND PALESTINIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT



APPENDIX III

PEACE AGREEMENTS

1. Oslo Accords Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements September 13th, 1993 (<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL>)
2. Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II or Taba Agreement) - Washington, D.C., 28th September 1995 (www.mfa.gov.il).
3. Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip - Washington, D.C., 28th September 1995 (Oslo II or Taba Agreement), under Appendix I, Article 28- Population Registry and Documentation (www.mfa.gov.il).

OSLO ACCORDS

Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements September 13, 1993

The Government of the State of Israel and the P.L.O. team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the "Palestinian Delegation"), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process. Accordingly, the two sides agree to the following principles:

ARTICLE I AIM OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

ARTICLE II FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD

The agreed framework for the interim period is set forth in this Declaration of Principles.

ARTICLE III ELECTIONS

1. In order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections will be held for the Council under agreed supervision and international observation, while the Palestinian police will ensure public order.
2. An agreement will be concluded on the exact mode and conditions of the elections in accordance with the protocol attached as Annex I, with the goal of holding the elections not later than nine months after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles.
3. These elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step toward the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.

ARTICLE IV JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and

the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period.

ARTICLE V

TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND PERMANENT STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

1. The five-year transitional period will begin upon the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.
2. Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian people representatives.
3. It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.
4. The two parties agree that the outcome of the permanent status negotiations should not be prejudiced or preempted by agreements reached for the interim period.

ARTICLE VI

PREPARATORY TRANSFER OF POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, a transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the authorized Palestinians for this task, as detailed herein, will commence. This transfer of authority will be of a preparatory nature until the inauguration of the Council.
2. Immediately after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, with the view to promoting economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, authority will be transferred to the Palestinians on the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. The Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force, as agreed upon. Pending the inauguration of the Council, the two parties may negotiate the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities, as agreed upon.

ARTICLE VII

INTERIM AGREEMENT

1. The Israeli and Palestinian delegations will negotiate an agreement on the interim period (the "Interim Agreement")
2. The Interim Agreement shall specify, among other things, the structure of the Council, the number of its members, and the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Council. The Interim Agreement shall also specify the Council's executive authority, legislative authority in accordance with Article IX below, and the independent Palestinian judicial organs.
3. The Interim Agreement shall include arrangements, to be implemented upon the inauguration of the Council, for the assumption by the Council of all of the powers and responsibilities transferred previously in accordance with Article VI above.
4. In order to enable the Council to promote economic growth, upon its inauguration, the Council will establish, among other things, a Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza

Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other Authorities agreed upon, in accordance with the Interim Agreement that will specify their powers and responsibilities.

5. After the inauguration of the Council, the Civil Administration will be dissolved, and the Israeli military government will be withdrawn.

ARTICLE VIII PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY

In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Council will establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.

ARTICLE IX LAWS AND MILITARY ORDERS

1. The Council will be empowered to legislate, in accordance with the Interim Agreement, within all authorities transferred to it.
2. Both parties will review jointly laws and military orders presently in force in remaining spheres.

ARTICLE X JOINT ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN LIAISON COMMITTEE

In order to provide for a smooth implementation of this Declaration of Principles and any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee will be established in order to deal with issues requiring coordination, other issues of common interest, and disputes.

ARTICLE XI ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC FIELDS

Recognizing the mutual benefit of cooperation in promoting the development of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an Israeli-Palestinian Economic Cooperation Committee will be established in order to develop and implement in a cooperative manner the programs identified in the protocols attached as Annex III and Annex IV.

ARTICLE XII LIAISON AND COOPERATION WITH JORDAN AND EGYPT

The two parties will invite the Governments of Jordan and Egypt to participate in establishing further liaison and cooperation arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian representatives, on the one hand, and the Governments of Jordan and Egypt, on the other hand, to promote cooperation between them. These arrangements will include the constitution of a Continuing Committee that will decide by agreement on the modalities of

admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this Committee.

ARTICLE XIII REDEPLOYMENT OF ISRAELI FORCES

1. After the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, and not later than the eve of elections for the Council, a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will take place, in addition to withdrawal of Israeli forces carried out in accordance with Article XIV.
2. In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas.
3. Further redeployments to specified locations will be gradually implemented commensurate with the assumption of responsibility for public order and internal security by the Palestinian police force pursuant to Article VIII above.

ARTICLE XIV ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA

Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, as detailed in the protocol attached as Annex II.

ARTICLE XV RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

1. Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Declaration of Principles, or any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, shall be resolved by negotiations through the Joint Liaison Committee to be established pursuant to Article X above.
2. Disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations may be resolved by a mechanism of conciliation to be agreed upon by the parties.
3. The parties may agree to submit to arbitration disputes relating to the interim period, which cannot be settled through conciliation. To this end, upon the agreement of both parties, the parties will establish an Arbitration Committee.

ARTICLE XVI ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Both parties view the multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a "Marshall Plan", the regional programs and other programs, including special programs for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex IV.

ARTICLE XVII MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. This Declaration of Principles will enter into force one month after it's signing.
2. All protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993.

For the Government of Israel
For the P.L.O.

Witnessed By:

The United States of America
The Russian Federation

ANNEX I PROTOCOL ON THE MODE AND CONDITIONS OF ELECTIONS

1. Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides.
2. In addition, the election agreement should cover, among other things, the following issues:
 - a. the system of elections;
 - b. the mode of the agreed supervision and international observation and their personal composition; and
 - c. rules and regulations regarding election campaign, including agreed arrangements for the organizing of mass media, and the possibility of licensing a broadcasting and TV station.
3. The future status of displaced Palestinians who were registered on 4th June 1967 will not be prejudiced because they are unable to participate in the election process due to practical reasons.

ANNEX II PROTOCOL ON WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM THE GAZA STRIP AND JERICHO AREA

1. The two sides will conclude and sign within two months from the date of entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. This agreement will include comprehensive arrangements to apply in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal.
2. Israel will implement an accelerated and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, beginning immediately with the signing of the agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and to be completed within a period not exceeding four months after the signing of this agreement.
3. The above agreement will include, among other things:
 - a. Arrangements for a smooth and peaceful transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Palestinian representatives.
 - b. Structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas, except: external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other mutually agreed matters.

- c. Arrangements for the assumption of internal security and public order by the Palestinian police force consisting of police officers recruited locally and from abroad holding Jordanian passports and Palestinian documents issued by Egypt). Those who will participate in the Palestinian police force coming from abroad should be trained as police and police officers.
 - d. A temporary international or foreign presence, as agreed upon.
 - e. Establishment of a joint Palestinian-Israeli Coordination and Cooperation Committee for mutual security purposes.
 - f. An economic development and stabilization program, including the establishment of an Emergency Fund, to encourage foreign investment, and financial and economic support. Both sides will coordinate and cooperate jointly and unilaterally with regional and international parties to support these aims.
 - g. Arrangements for a safe passage for persons and transportation between the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.
4. The above agreement will include arrangements for coordination between both parties regarding passages:
 - a. Gaza - Egypt; and
 - b. Jericho - Jordan.
 5. The offices responsible for carrying out the powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority under this Annex II and Article VI of the Declaration of Principles will be located in the Gaza Strip and in the Jericho area pending the inauguration of the Council.
 6. Other than these agreed arrangements, the status of the Gaza Strip and Jericho area will continue to be an integral part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will not be changed in the interim period.

ANNEX III

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The two sides agree to establish an Israeli-Palestinian continuing Committee for Economic Cooperation, focusing, among other things, on the following:

1. Cooperation in the field of water, including a Water Development Program prepared by experts from both sides, which will also specify the mode of cooperation in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will include proposals for studies and plans on water rights of each party, as well as on the equitable utilization of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period.
2. Cooperation in the field of electricity, including an Electricity Development Program, which will also specify the mode of cooperation for the production, maintenance, purchase and sale of electricity resources.
3. Cooperation in the field of energy, including an Energy Development Program, which will provide for the exploitation of oil and gas for industrial purposes, particularly in the Gaza Strip and in the Negev, and will encourage further joint exploitation of other energy resources. This Program may also provide for the construction of a Petrochemical industrial complex in the Gaza Strip and the construction of oil and gas pipelines.
4. Cooperation in the field of finance, including a Financial Development and Action Program for the encouragement of international investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in Israel, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian Development Bank.
5. Cooperation in the field of transport and communications, including a Program, which will define guidelines for the establishment of a Gaza Sea Port Area, and will provide for

- the establishing of transport and communications lines to and from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Israel and to other countries. In addition, this Program will provide for carrying out the necessary construction of roads, railways, communications lines, etc.
6. Cooperation in the field of trade, including studies, and Trade Promotion Programs, which will encourage local, regional and inter-regional trade, as well as a feasibility study of creating free trade zones in the Gaza Strip and in Israel, mutual access to these zones, and cooperation in other areas related to trade and commerce.
 7. Cooperation in the field of industry, including Industrial Development Programs, which will provide for the establishment of joint Israeli- Palestinian Industrial Research and Development Centers, will promote Palestinian-Israeli joint ventures, and provide guidelines for cooperation in the textile, food, pharmaceutical, electronics, diamonds, computer and science-based industries.
 8. A program for cooperation in, and regulation of, labor relations and cooperation in social welfare issues.
 9. A Human Resources Development and Cooperation Plan, providing for joint Israeli- Palestinian workshops and seminars, and for the establishment of joint vocational training centers, research institutes and data banks.
 10. An Environmental Protection Plan, providing for joint and/or coordinated measures in this sphere.
 11. A program for developing coordination and cooperation in the field of communication and media.
 12. Any other programs of mutual interest.

ANNEX IV

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

1. The two sides will cooperate in the context of the multilateral peace efforts in promoting a Development Program for the region, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to be initiated by the G-7. The parties will request the G-7 to seek the participation in this program of other interested states, such as members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, regional Arab states and institutions, as well as members of the private sector.
2. The Development Program will consist of two elements:
 - a. an Economic Development Program for the 'West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
 - b. a Regional Economic Development Program.
- C. The Economic Development Program for the West Bank and the Gaza strip will consist of the following elements:
 1. A Social Rehabilitation Program, including a Housing and Construction Program.
 2. A Small and Medium Business Development Plan.
 3. An Infrastructure Development Program (water, electricity, transportation and communications, etc.)
 4. A Human Resources Plan.
 5. Other programs.
- D. The Regional Economic Development Program may consist of the following elements:
 1. The establishment of a Middle East Development Fund, as a first step, and a Middle East Development Bank, as a second step.
 2. The development of a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian Plan for coordinated exploitation of the Dead Sea area.

3. The Mediterranean Sea (Gaza) - Dead Sea Canal.
 4. Regional Desalinization and other water development projects.
 5. A regional plan for agricultural development, including a coordinated regional effort for the prevention of desertification.
 6. Interconnection of electricity grids.
 7. Regional cooperation for the transfer, distribution and industrial exploitation of gas, oil and other energy resources.
 8. A Regional Tourism, Transportation and Telecommunications Development Plan.
 9. Regional cooperation in other spheres.
3. The two sides will encourage the multilateral working groups, and will coordinate towards their success. The two parties will encourage intercessional activities, as well as pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, within the various multilateral working groups.

Done at Washington, D.C., this thirteenth day of September, 1993.

*For the Government of Israel
For the P.L.O.*

Witnessed By:

*The United States of America
The Russian Federation*

Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II or Taba Agreement)

Washington, D.C., September 28, 1995

The Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (hereinafter "the PLO"), the representative of the Palestinian people:

PREAMBLE

WITHIN the framework of the Middle East peace process initiated at Madrid in October 1991;

REAFFIRMING their determination to put an end to decades of confrontation and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security, while recognizing their mutual legitimate and political rights;

REAFFIRMING their desire to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process;

RECOGNIZING that the peace process and the new era that it has created, as well as the new relationship established between the two Parties as described above, are irreversible, and the determination of the two Parties to maintain, sustain and continue the peace process;

RECOGNIZING that the aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, i.e. the elected Council (hereinafter "the Council" or "the Palestinian Council"), and the elected Ra'ees of the Executive Authority, for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years from the date of signing the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (hereinafter "the Gaza-Jericho Agreement") on May 4, 1994, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338;

REAFFIRMING their understanding that the interim self-government arrangements contained in this Agreement are an integral part of the whole peace process, that the negotiations on the permanent status, that will start as soon as possible but not later than May 4, 1996, will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and that the Interim Agreement shall settle all the issues of the interim period and that no such issues will be deferred to the agenda of the permanent status negotiations;

REAFFIRMING their adherence to the mutual recognition and commitments expressed in the letters dated September 9, 1993, signed by and exchanged between the Prime Minister of Israel and the Chairman of the PLO;

DESIROUS of putting into effect the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed at Washington, D.C. on September 13, 1993, and the Agreed Minutes thereto (hereinafter "the DOP") and in particular Article III and Annex I concerning the holding of direct, free and general political elections for the Council and the Ra'ees of the Executive

Authority in order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip may democratically elect accountable representatives;

RECOGNIZING that these elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step toward the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements and will provide a democratic basis for the establishment of Palestinian institutions;

REAFFIRMING their mutual commitment to act, in accordance with this Agreement, immediately, efficiently and effectively against acts or threats of terrorism, violence or incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis;

FOLLOWING the Gaza-Jericho Agreement: the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities signed at Erez on August 29, 1994 (hereinafter "the Preparatory Transfer Agreement"); and the Protocol on Further Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities signed at Cairo on August 27, 1995 (hereinafter "the Further Transfer Protocol"); which three agreements will be superseded by this Agreement;

HEREBY AGREE as follows:

CHAPTER I - THE COUNCIL

ARTICLE I

Transfer of Authority

1. Israel shall transfer powers and responsibilities as specified in this Agreement from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Council in accordance with this Agreement. Israel shall continue to exercise powers and responsibilities not so transferred.
2. Pending the inauguration of the Council, the powers and responsibilities transferred to the Council shall be exercised by the Palestinian Authority established in accordance with the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, which shall also have all the rights, liabilities and obligations to be assumed by the Council in this regard. Accordingly, the term "Council" throughout this Agreement shall, pending the inauguration of the Council, be construed as meaning the Palestinian Authority.
3. The transfer of powers and responsibilities to the police force established by the Palestinian Council in accordance with Article XIV below (hereinafter "the Palestinian Police") shall be accomplished in a phased manner, as detailed in this Agreement and in the Protocol concerning Redeployment and Security Arrangements attached as Annex I to this Agreement (hereinafter "Annex I").
4. As regards the transfer and assumption of authority in civil spheres, powers and responsibilities shall be transferred and assumed as set out in the Protocol Concerning Civil Affairs attached as Annex III to this Agreement (hereinafter "Annex III").
5. After the inauguration of the Council, the Civil Administration in the West Bank will be dissolved, and the Israeli military government shall be withdrawn. The withdrawal of the military government shall not prevent it from exercising the powers and responsibilities not transferred to the Council.

6. A Joint Civil Affairs Coordination and Cooperation Committee (hereinafter "the CAC"), Joint Regional Civil Affairs Subcommittees, one for the Gaza Strip and the other for the West Bank, and District Civil Liaison Offices in the West Bank shall be established in order to provide for coordination and cooperation in civil affairs between the Council and Israel, as detailed in Annex III.

7. The offices of the Council, and the offices of its Ra'ees and its Executive Authority and other committees, shall be located in areas under Palestinian territorial jurisdiction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

ARTICLE II

Elections

1. In order that the Palestinian people of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections will be held for the Council and the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council in accordance with the provisions set out in the Protocol concerning Elections attached as Annex II to this Agreement (hereinafter "Annex II").

2. These elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step towards the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements and will provide a democratic basis for the establishment of Palestinian institutions.

3. Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there may participate in the election process in accordance with the provisions contained in this Article and in Article VI of Annex II (Election Arrangements concerning Jerusalem).

4. The elections shall be called by the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority immediately following the signing of this Agreement to take place at the earliest practicable date following the redeployment of Israeli forces in accordance with Annex I, and consistent with the requirements of the election timetable as provided in Annex II, the Election Law and the Election Regulations, as defined in Article I of Annex II.

ARTICLE III

Structure of the Palestinian Council

1. The Palestinian Council and the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council constitute the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, which will be elected by the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip for the transitional period agreed in Article I of the DOP.

2. The Council shall possess both legislative power and executive power, in accordance with Articles VII and IX of the DOP. The Council shall carry out and be responsible for all the legislative and executive powers and responsibilities transferred to it under this Agreement. The exercise of legislative powers shall be in accordance with Article XVIII of this Agreement (Legislative Powers of the Council).

3. The Council and the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council shall be directly and simultaneously elected by the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip,

in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and the Election Law and Regulations, which shall not be contrary to the provisions of this Agreement.

4. The Council and the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council shall be elected for a transitional period not exceeding five years from the signing of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement on May 4, 1994.

5. Immediately upon its inauguration, the Council will elect from among its members a Speaker. The Speaker will preside over the meetings of the Council, administer the Council and its committees, decide on the agenda of each meeting, and lay before the Council proposals for voting and declare their results.

6. The jurisdiction of the Council shall be as determined in Article XVII of this Agreement (Jurisdiction).

7. The organization, structure and functioning of the Council shall be in accordance with this Agreement and the Basic Law for the Palestinian Interim Self-government Authority, which Law shall be adopted by the Council. The Basic Law and any regulations made under it shall not be contrary to the provisions of this Agreement.

8. The Council shall be responsible under its executive powers for the offices, services and departments transferred to it and may establish, within its jurisdiction, ministries and subordinate bodies, as necessary for the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

9. The Speaker will present for the Council's approval proposed internal procedures that will regulate, among other things, the decision-making processes of the Council.

ARTICLE IV

Size of the Council

The Palestinian Council shall be composed of 82 representatives and the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority, who will be directly and simultaneously elected by the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

ARTICLE V

The Executive Authority of the Council

1. The Council will have a committee that will exercise the executive authority of the Council, formed in accordance with paragraph 4 below (hereinafter "the Executive Authority").

2. The Executive Authority shall be bestowed with the executive authority of the Council and will exercise it on behalf of the Council. It shall determine its own internal procedures and decision-making processes.

3. The Council will publish the names of the members of the Executive Authority immediately upon their initial appointment and subsequent to any changes.

4. a. The Ra'ees of the Executive Authority shall be an ex officio member of the Executive Authority.

b. All of the other members of the Executive Authority, except as provided in subparagraph c. below, shall be members of the Council, chosen and proposed to the Council by the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority and approved by the Council.

c. The Ra'ees of the Executive Authority shall have the right to appoint some persons, in number not exceeding twenty percent of the total membership of the Executive Authority, who are not members of the Council, to exercise executive authority and participate in government tasks. Such appointed members may not vote in meetings of the Council.

d. Non-elected members of the Executive Authority must have a valid address in an area under the jurisdiction of the Council.

ARTICLE VI

Other Committees of the Council

1. The Council may form small committees to simplify the proceedings of the Council and to assist in controlling the activity of its Executive Authority.

2. Each committee shall establish its own decision-making processes within the general framework of the organization and structure of the Council.

ARTICLE VII

Open Government

1. All meetings of the Council and of its committees, other than the Executive Authority, shall be open to the public, except upon a resolution of the Council or the relevant committee on the grounds of security, or commercial or personal confidentiality.

2. Participation in the deliberations of the Council, its committees and the Executive Authority shall be limited to their respective members only. Experts may be invited to such meetings to address specific issues on an ad hoc basis.

ARTICLE VIII

Judicial Review

Any person or organization affected by any act or decision of the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council or of any member of the Executive Authority, who believes that such act or decision exceeds the authority of the Ra'ees or of such member, or is otherwise incorrect in law or procedure, may apply to the relevant Palestinian Court of Justice for a review of such activity or decision.

ARTICLE IX

Powers and Responsibilities of the Council

1. Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, the Council will, within its jurisdiction, have legislative powers as set out in Article XVIII of this Agreement, as well as executive powers.

2. The executive power of the Palestinian Council shall extend to all matters within its jurisdiction under this Agreement or any future agreement that may be reached between the two Parties during the interim period. It shall include the power to formulate and conduct Palestinian policies and to supervise their implementation, to issue any rule or regulation under powers given in approved legislation and administrative decisions necessary for the realization of Palestinian self-government, the power to employ staff, sue and be sued and conclude contracts, and the power to keep and administer registers and records of the population, and issue certificates, licenses and documents.

3. The Palestinian Council's executive decisions and acts shall be consistent with the provisions of this Agreement.

4. The Palestinian Council may adopt all necessary measures in order to enforce the law and any of its decisions, and bring proceedings before the Palestinian courts and tribunals.

5. a. In accordance with the DOP, the Council will not have powers and responsibilities in the sphere of foreign relations, which sphere includes the establishment abroad of embassies, consulates or other types of foreign missions and posts or permitting their establishment in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, the appointment of or admission of diplomatic and consular staff, and the exercise of diplomatic functions.

b. Notwithstanding the provisions of this paragraph, the PLO may conduct negotiations and sign agreements with states or international organizations for the benefit of the Council in the following cases only:

(1) economic agreements, as specifically provided in Annex V of this Agreement:

(2) agreements with donor countries for the purpose of implementing arrangements for the provision of assistance to the Council,

(3) agreements for the purpose of implementing the regional development plans detailed in Annex IV of the DOP or in agreements entered into in the framework of the multilateral negotiations, and

(4) cultural, scientific and educational agreements. Dealings between the Council and representatives of foreign states and international organizations, as well as the establishment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of representative offices other than those described in subparagraph 5.a above, for the purpose of implementing the agreements referred to in subparagraph 5.b above, shall not be considered foreign relations.

6. Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, the Council shall, within its jurisdiction, have an independent judicial system composed of independent Palestinian courts and tribunals.

CHAPTER 2 - REDEPLOYMENT AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

ARTICLE X

Redeployment of Israeli Military Forces

1. The first phase of the Israeli military forces redeployment will cover populated areas in the West Bank - cities, towns, villages, refugee camps and hamlets - as set out in Annex I, and will be completed prior to the eve of the Palestinian elections, i. e., 22 days before the day of the elections.
2. Further redeployments of Israeli military forces to specified military locations will commence after the inauguration of the Council and will be gradually implemented commensurate with the assumption of responsibility for public order and internal security by the Palestinian Police, to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council as detailed in Articles XI (Land) and XIII (Security), below and in Annex I.
3. The Palestinian Police shall be deployed and shall assume responsibility for public order and internal security for Palestinians in a phased manner in accordance with XIII (Security) below and Annex I.
4. Israel shall continue to carry the responsibility for external security, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.
5. For the purpose of this Agreement, "Israeli military forces" includes Israel Police and other Israeli security forces.

ARTICLE XI

Land

1. The two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, the integrity and status of which will be preserved during the interim period.
2. The two sides agree that West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations, will come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Council in a phased manner, to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council, as specified below:
 - a. Land in populated areas (Areas A and B), including government and Al Waqf land, will come under the jurisdiction of the Council during the first phase of redeployment.
 - b. All civil powers and responsibilities, including planning and zoning, in Areas A and B, set out in Annex III, will be transferred to and assumed by the Council during the first phase of redeployment.
 - c. In Area C, during the first phase of redeployment Israel will transfer to the Council civil powers and responsibilities not relating to territory, as set out in Annex III.
 - d. The further redeployments of Israeli military forces to specified military locations will be gradually implemented in accordance with the DOP in three phases, each to take place after an interval of six months, after the inauguration of the Council, to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council.

e. During the further redeployment phases to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council, powers and responsibilities relating to territory will be transferred gradually to Palestinian jurisdiction that will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for the issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations.

f. The specified military locations referred to in Article X, paragraph 2 above will be determined in the further redeployment phases, within the specified time-frame ending not later than 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council, and will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations.

3. For the purpose of this Agreement and until the completion of the first phase of the further redeployments:

a. "Area A" means the populated areas delineated by a red line and shaded in brown on attached map No. 1;

b. "Area B" means the populated areas delineated by a red line and shaded in yellow on attached map No. 1, and the built-up area of the hamlets listed in Appendix 6 to Annex I, and

c. "Area C" means areas of the West Bank outside Areas A and B, which, except for the issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations, will be gradually transferred to Palestinian jurisdiction in accordance with this Agreement.

ARTICLE XII

Arrangements for Security and Public Order

1. In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Council shall establish a strong police force as set out in Article XIV below. Israel shall continue to carry the responsibility for defense against external threats, including the responsibility for protecting the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, and for defense against external threats from the sea and from the air, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis and Settlements, for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order, and will have all the powers to take the steps necessary to meet this responsibility.

2. Agreed security arrangements and coordination mechanisms are specified in Annex I.

3. A Joint Coordination and Cooperation Committee for Mutual Security Purposes (hereinafter "the JSC"), as well as Joint Regional Security Committees (hereinafter "RSCs") and Joint District Coordination Offices (hereinafter "DCOs"), are hereby established.

Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement

Protocol Concerning Elections - Article II Right to Vote and the Electoral Register

1. Right to Vote

a. The right to vote will be universal, regardless of sex, race, religion, opinion, social origin, education, or property status. Every Palestinian who meets the qualification to vote shall have the right to be registered to vote.

b. Only a person whose name appears on the Electoral Register, as defined in paragraph 2 below, and who is 18 years old or older on the day of the elections, will have the right to vote.

c. No person may be registered as an elector in more than one polling district, as defined in paragraph 2 below.

d. The qualification to vote will be the same for the election for the Ra'ees of the Executive Authority of the Council and the election for the Council.

e. Israeli citizens shall not be entered on the Electoral Register.

f. To be qualified to be entered on the Electoral Register, a person must:

(1) be Palestinian;

(2) be 17 years old or older;

(3) have his or her abode in the polling district where he or she is registered to vote;

(4) not be disqualified under subparagraph k. below; and

(5) be entered in the population register maintained by the Palestinian Authority or the Israeli authorities (hereinafter together "the Population Register"), and thus be the holder of an identity card issued by the Palestinian Authority or the Israeli authorities.

g. Any person who:

(1) will be at least 40 years old on January 1, 1996 and can provide satisfactory evidence that he or she has actually lived in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip continuously, except for short absences, for at least 3 years immediately prior to the date of the signing of this Agreement; or

(2) will be less than 40 years old on January 1, 1996 and can provide satisfactory evidence that he or she has actually lived in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip continuously, except for short absences, for at least 4 years immediately prior to the date of the signing of this Agreement,

shall be entitled notwithstanding the fact that he or she was not previously entered in the Population Register, to be entered in the Population Register and to receive the appropriate identity card. The Palestinian Authority and Israel, through the CAC, shall together invite

applications to be so entered in the Population Register. Such applications shall be submitted prior to the date of the elections to the Civil Administration or the relevant joint Israeli-Palestinian liaison body as appropriate and shall be dealt with by the Civil Administration or by both sides of such joint liaison body on an expedited basis to assist the process of registration.

h. The inclusion of any person on the Electoral Register at any address shall be without prejudice to the question of that person's legal abode at that address.

i. In this Agreement, the word "abode" denotes the main permanent fixed address within any polling district at which, at the time of the initial registration canvass, a person actually lives.

j. In this Agreement, the word "address" denotes the community, house, street, neighborhood or other description identifying the specific abode in which a person actually lives, where such information exists.

k. The following persons will be disqualified from being entered on the Electoral Register:

- (1) any person deprived of the right to vote by judicial sentence, while that sentence is in force;
- (2) any person declared incapable by judicial decision; and
- (3) any person detained in a psychiatric institution by judicial decision during the period of that detention.

"Judicial sentence" means a judicial verdict or sentence made by a Palestinian court.

Annex III – Protocol Concerning Civil Affairs - Article 28 Population Registry and Documentation

1. Powers and responsibilities in the sphere of population registry and documentation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be transferred from the military government and its Civil Administration to the Palestinian side.

2. The Palestinian side shall maintain and administer a population registry and issue certificates and documents of all types, in accordance with and subject to the provisions of this Agreement. To this end, the Palestinian side shall receive from Israel the population registry for the residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in addition to files and records concerning them, as follows:

- Notices of births.
- Old handwritten records of births and deaths and the indexes from 1918 till 1981.
- Photographs file with all its equipment.

- All computer devices and equipment with all accessories (screens, printers and communications equipment).

3. A Joint Committee will be established to solve the reissuance of identity cards to those residents who have lost their identity cards.

4. The existing identity card of the present residents, as well as of new residents, shall be substituted by a new identity card with a new I.D. number. Such substituted identity cards shall be issued by the Palestinian side and shall bear its symbols. New identification numbers may be issued by the Palestinian side a year after the signing of this Agreement. The new identification numbers and the numbering system will be transferred to the Israeli side. All titles and values in such identity cards will be in Arabic and Hebrew, and the number of such identity cards will be in Arabic numerals (i.e. 0-9).

5. Possession of the aforementioned identity card, whether it was issued by the military government and its Civil Administration or substituted or issued by the Palestinian side, and any other necessary documents, notification of which will be given to the Palestinian side through the

CAC, shall be required for entry into Israel by residents.

6. Safe passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as provided for in Annex I, shall require the possession of the aforementioned identity card, whether it was issued by the military government and its Civil Administration or substituted or issued by the Palestinian side, and any other necessary documents, notification of which will be given to the Palestinian side through the CAC.

7. Israel recognizes the validity of the Palestinian passports/travel documents issued by the Palestinian side to Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Gaza-Jericho Agreement and this Agreement. Such passports/travel documents shall entitle their holders to exit abroad through the passages or through Israeli points of exit.

8. The holder of a VIP Palestinian passport/travel document will pass the international passages free of the fees and will enjoy VIP treatment in the Israeli international exit points.

9. Special VIP certificates may be issued as concluded in the Protocol regarding Arrangements with respect to Passages of October 31, 1994, and in this Agreement.

10. In order to ensure efficient passage procedures and to avoid discrepancies and with a view to enabling Israel to maintain an updated and current registry, the Palestinian side shall provide Israel, on a regular basis through the CAC, with the following information regarding passports/travel documents and identity cards:

a. With respect to passports/travel documents: full name, mother's name, ID number, date of birth, place of birth, sex, profession, passport/travel document number and date of issue and a current photograph of the person concerned.

b. With respect to identity cards: identity card number, full name, mother's name, date of birth, sex and religion and a current photograph of the person concerned.

The Palestinian side shall inform Israel of every change in its population registry, including, inter alia, any change in the place of residence of any resident.

11. To reflect the spirit of the peace process, the Palestinian side has the right, with the prior approval of Israel, to grant permanent residency in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to:

- a. investors, for the purpose of encouraging investment;
- b. spouses and children of Palestinian residents, and
- c. other persons, for humanitarian reasons, in order to promote and upgrade family reunification.

12. The Palestinian side shall have the right to register in the population registry all persons who were born abroad or in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, if under the age of sixteen years and either of their parents is a resident of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

13. a. Persons from countries not having diplomatic relations with Israel who visit the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shall be required to obtain a special visitor's permit to be issued by the Palestinian side and cleared by Israel. Requests for such permits shall be filed by any relative or acquaintance of the visitor, who is a resident, through the Palestinian side, or by the Palestinian side itself. All titles and values in such permits will be in English.

b. Visitors to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shall be permitted to remain in these areas for a period of up to three months granted by the Palestinian side and cleared by Israel. Such visitors can enter Israel during the validity of their visit permit, without any need for another permit.

The Palestinian side may extend this three months period for an additional period of up to four months. The Palestinian side will notify Israel of this extension. Any further extensions require the approval of Israel.

The Palestinian side may, upon clearance by Israel, issue visitors' permits for the purpose of study or work, for a period of one year which may be extended by agreement with Israel. In any event, the duration of such visitors' permits shall not exceed the period of validity of the said visitors' passports or travel documents. The Palestinian side may grant permanent residency to the employees upon agreement with Israel.

14. Persons from countries having diplomatic relations with Israel who visit the Gaza Strip and the West Bank shall either be required to obtain the aforementioned visitor's permit or to hold a valid passport and an Israeli visa, when required. Such visitors can enter Israel during the validity of their visit permit, without any need for another permit.

15. The Palestinian side shall ensure that visitors referred to above shall not overstay the duration of their entry permit and authorized extensions.

16. The Palestinian side shall use, in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestinian revenue stamps and shall determine their required fees.

17. The CAC will establish a subcommittee to supervise the implementation of this Article.

APPENDIX V
UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS

1. UN Resolution 181
2. UN Resolution 194
3. UN Resolution 242

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II)
Future government of Palestine
November 29, 1947

A

The General Assembly,

Having met in special session at the request of the mandatory Power to constitute and instruct a special committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of the future government of Palestine at the second regular session;

Having constituted a Special Committee and instructed it to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine, and to prepare proposals for the solution of the problem, and

Having received and examined the report of the Special Committee (document A/364) 1/ including a number of unanimous recommendations and a plan of partition with economic union approved by the majority of the Special Committee,

Considers that the present situation in Palestine is one which is likely to impair the general welfare and friendly relations among nations;

Takes note of the declaration by the mandatory Power that it plans to complete its evacuation of Palestine by 1 August 1948;

Recommends to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory Power for Palestine, and to all other Members of the United Nations the adoption and implementation, with regard to the future government of Palestine, of the Plan of Partition with Economic Union set out below;

Requests that

- (a) The Security Council take the necessary measures as provided for in the plan for its implementation;
- (b) The Security Council consider, if circumstances during the transitional period require such consideration, whether the situation in Palestine constitutes a threat to the peace. If it decides that such a threat exists, and in order to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council should supplement the authorization of the General Assembly by taking measures, under Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter, to empower the United Nations Commission, as provided in this resolution, to exercise in Palestine the functions which are assigned to it by this resolution;
- (c) The Security Council determine as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter, any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this resolution;
- (d) The Trusteeship Council be informed of the responsibilities envisaged for it in this plan;

Calls upon the inhabitants of Palestine to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put this plan into effect;

Appeals to all Governments and all peoples to refrain from taking action which might hamper or delay the carrying out of these recommendations, and

Authorizes the Secretary-General to reimburse travel and subsistence expenses of the members of the Commission referred to in Part I, Section B, paragraph 1 below, on such basis and in such form as he may determine most appropriate in the circumstances, and to provide the Commission with the necessary staff to assist in carrying out the functions assigned to the Commission by the General Assembly.

B 2/

The General Assembly

Authorizes the Secretary-General to draw from the Working Capital Fund a sum not to exceed \$2,000,000 for the purposes set forth in the last paragraph of the resolution on the future government of Palestine.

*Hundred and twenty-eighth plenary meeting
29 November 1947*

*[At its hundred and twenty-eighth plenary meeting on 29 November 1947 the General Assembly, in accordance with the terms of the above resolution [181 A], elected the following members of the United Nations Commission on Palestine: **Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and Philippines.**]*

PLAN OF PARTITION WITH ECONOMIC UNION

PART I

Future constitution and government of Palestine

A. TERMINATION OF MANDATE, PARTITION AND INDEPENDENCE

1. The Mandate for Palestine shall terminate as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

2. The armed forces of the mandatory Power shall be progressively withdrawn from Palestine, the withdrawal to be completed as soon as possible but in any case not later than 1 August 1948.

The mandatory Power shall advise the Commission, as far in advance as possible, of its intention to terminate the Mandate and to evacuate each area.

The mandatory Power shall use its best endeavours to ensure that an area situated in the territory of the Jewish State, including a seaport and hinterland adequate to provide facilities for a substantial immigration, shall be evacuated at the earliest possible date and in any event not later than 1 February 1948.

3. Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of

Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948. The boundaries of the Arab State, the Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem shall be as described in parts II and III below.

4. The period between the adoption by the General Assembly of its recommendation on the question of Palestine and the establishment of the independence of the Arab and Jewish States shall be a transitional period.

B. STEPS PREPARATORY TO INDEPENDENCE

1. A Commission shall be set up consisting of one representative of each of five Member States. The Members represented on the Commission shall be elected by the General Assembly on as broad a basis, geographically and otherwise, as possible.

2. The administration of Palestine shall, as the mandatory Power withdraws its armed forces, be progressively turned over to the Commission; which shall act in conformity with the recommendations of the General Assembly, under the guidance of the Security Council. The mandatory Power shall to the fullest possible extent co-ordinate its plans for withdrawal with the plans of the Commission to take over and administer areas which have been evacuated.

In the discharge of this administrative responsibility the Commission shall have authority to issue necessary regulations and take other measures as required.

The mandatory Power shall not take any action to prevent, obstruct or delay the implementation by the Commission of the measures recommended by the General Assembly.

3. On its arrival in Palestine the Commission shall proceed to carry out measures for the establishment of the frontiers of the Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem in accordance with the general lines of the recommendations of the General Assembly on the partition of Palestine. Nevertheless, the boundaries as described in part II of this plan are to be modified in such a way that village areas as a rule will not be divided by state boundaries unless pressing reasons make that necessary.

4. The Commission, after consultation with the democratic parties and other public organizations of The Arab and Jewish States, shall select and establish in each State as rapidly as possible a Provisional Council of Government. The activities of both the Arab and Jewish Provisional Councils of Government shall be carried out under the general direction of the Commission.

If by 1 April 1948 a Provisional Council of Government cannot be selected for either of the States, or, if selected, cannot carry out its functions, the Commission shall communicate that fact to the Security Council for such action with respect to that State as the Security Council may deem proper, and to the Secretary-General for communication to the Members of the United Nations.

5. Subject to the provisions of these recommendations, during the transitional period the Provisional Councils of Government, acting under the Commission, shall have full authority in the areas under their control, including authority over matters of immigration and land regulation.

6. The Provisional Council of Government of each State acting under the Commission, shall

progressively receive from the Commission full responsibility for the administration of that State in the period between the termination of the Mandate and the establishment of the State's independence.

7. The Commission shall instruct the Provisional Councils of Government of both the Arab and Jewish States, after their formation, to proceed to the establishment of administrative organs of government, central and local.

8. The Provisional Council of Government of each State shall, within the shortest time possible, recruit an armed militia from the residents of that State, sufficient in number to maintain internal order and to prevent frontier clashes.

This armed militia in each State shall, for operational purposes, be under the command of Jewish or Arab officers resident in that State, but general political and military control, including the choice of the militia's High Command, shall be exercised by the Commission.

9. The Provisional Council of Government of each State shall, not later than two months after the withdrawal of the armed forces of the mandatory Power, hold elections to the Constituent Assembly which shall be conducted on democratic lines.

The election regulations in each State shall be drawn up by the Provisional Council of Government and approved by the Commission. Qualified voters for each State for this election shall be persons over eighteen years of age who are: (a) Palestinian citizens residing in that State and (b) Arabs and Jews residing in the State, although not Palestinian citizens, who, before voting, have signed a notice of intention to become citizens of such State.

Arabs and Jews residing in the City of Jerusalem who have signed a notice of intention to become citizens, the Arabs of the Arab State and the Jews of the Jewish State, shall be entitled to vote in the Arab and Jewish States respectively.

Women may vote and be elected to the Constituent Assemblies.

During the transitional period no Jew shall be permitted to establish residence in the area of the proposed Arab State, and no Arab shall be permitted to establish residence in the area of the proposed Jewish State, except by special leave of the Commission.

10. The Constituent Assembly of each State shall draft a democratic constitution for its State and choose a provisional government to succeed the Provisional Council of Government appointed by the Commission. The constitutions of the States shall embody chapters 1 and 2 of the Declaration provided for in section C below and include inter alia provisions for:

(a) Establishing in each State a legislative body elected by universal suffrage and by secret ballot on the basis of proportional representation, and an executive body responsible to the legislature;

(b) Settling all international disputes in which the State may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered;

(c) Accepting the obligation of the State to refrain in its international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations;

(d) Guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, language, speech and publication, education, assembly and association;

(e) Preserving freedom of transit and visit for all residents and citizens of the other State in Palestine and the City of Jerusalem, subject to considerations of national security, provided that each State shall control residence within its borders.

11. The Commission shall appoint a preparatory economic commission of three members to make whatever arrangements are possible for economic co-operation, with a view to establishing, as soon as practicable, the Economic Union and the Joint Economic Board, as provided in section D below.

12. During the period between the adoption of the recommendations on the question of Palestine by the General Assembly and the termination of the Mandate, the mandatory Power in Palestine shall maintain full responsibility for administration in areas from which it has not withdrawn its armed forces. The Commission shall assist the mandatory Power in the carrying out of these functions. Similarly the mandatory Power shall co-operate with the Commission in the execution of its functions.

13. With a view to ensuring that there shall be continuity in the functioning of administrative services and that, on the withdrawal of the armed forces of the mandatory Power, the whole administration shall be in the charge of the Provisional Councils and the Joint Economic Board, respectively, acting under the Commission, there shall be a progressive transfer, from the mandatory Power to the Commission, of responsibility for all the functions of government, including that of maintaining law and order in the areas from which the forces of the mandatory Power have been withdrawn.

14. The Commission shall be guided in its activities by the recommendations of the General Assembly and by such instructions as the Security Council may consider necessary to issue.

The measures taken by the Commission, within the recommendations of the General Assembly, shall become immediately effective unless the Commission has previously received contrary instructions from the Security Council.

The Commission shall render periodic monthly progress reports, or more frequently if desirable, to the Security Council.

15. The Commission shall make its final report to the next regular session of the General Assembly and to the Security Council simultaneously.

PART II

Boundaries

A. THE ARAB STATE

The area of the Arab State in Western Galilee is bounded on the west by the Mediterranean and on the north by the frontier of the Lebanon from Ras en Naqura to a point north of Saliha. From there the boundary proceeds southwards, leaving the built-up area of Saliha in the Arab State, to

join the southernmost point of this village. Thence it follows the western boundary line of the villages of `Alma, Rihaniya and Teitaba, thence following the northern boundary line of Meirun village to join the Acre-Safad sub-district boundary line. It follows this line to a point west of Es Sammu'i village and joins it again at the northernmost point of Farradiya. Thence it follows the sub-district boundary line to the Acre-Safad main road. From here it follows the western boundary of Kafr I'nan village until it reaches the Tiberias-Acre sub-district boundary line, passing to the west of the junction of the Acre-Safad and Lubiya-Kafr I'nan roads. From south-west corner of Kafr I'nan village the boundary line follows the western boundary of the Tiberias sub-district to a point close to the boundary line between the villages of Maghar and Eilabun, thence bulging out to the west to include as much of the eastern part of the plain of Battuf as is necessary for the reservoir proposed by the Jewish Agency for the irrigation of lands to the south and east.

The boundary rejoins the Tiberias sub-district boundary at a point on the Nazareth-Tiberias road south-east of the built-up area of Tur'an; thence it runs southwards, at first following the sub-district boundary and then passing between the Kadoorie Agricultural School and Mount Tabor, to a point due south at the base of Mount Tabor. From here it runs due west, parallel to the horizontal grid line 230, to the north-east corner of the village lands of Tel Adashim. It then runs to the north-west corner of these lands, whence it turns south and west so as to include in the Arab State the sources of the Nazareth water supply in Yafa village. On reaching Ginneiger it follows the eastern, northern and western boundaries of the lands of this village to their south-west corner, whence it proceeds in a straight line to a point on the Haifa-Afula railway on the boundary between the villages of Sarid and El Mujeidil. This is the point of intersection.

The south-western boundary of the area of the Arab State in Galilee takes a line from this point, passing northwards along the eastern boundaries of Sarid and Gevat to the north-eastern corner of Nahalal, proceeding thence across the land of Kefar ha Horesh to a central point on the southern boundary of the village of `Ilut, thence westwards along that village boundary to the eastern boundary of Beit Lahm, thence northwards and north-eastwards along its western boundary to the north-eastern corner of Waldheim and thence north-westwards across the village lands of Shafa 'Amr to the south-eastern corner of Ramat Yohanan'. From here it runs due north-north-east to a point on the Shafa 'Amr-Haifa road, west of its junction with the road to I'Billin. From there it proceeds north-east to a point on the southern boundary of I'Billin situated to the west of the I'Billin-Birwa road. Thence along that boundary to its westernmost point, whence it turns to the north, follows across the village land of Tamra to the north-westernmost corner and along the western boundary of Julis until it reaches the Acre-Safad road. It then runs westwards along the southern side of the Safad-Acre road to the Galilee-Haifa District boundary, from which point it follows that boundary to the sea.

The boundary of the hill country of Samaria and Judea starts on the Jordan River at the Wadi Malih south-east of Beisan and runs due west to meet the Beisan-Jericho road and then follows the western side of that road in a north-westerly direction to the junction of the boundaries of the sub-districts of Beisan, Nablus, and Jenin. From that point it follows the Nablus-Jenin sub-district boundary westwards for a distance of about three kilometers and then turns north-westwards, passing to the east of the built-up areas of the villages of Jalbun and Faqu'a, to the boundary of the sub-districts of Jenin and Beisan at a point north-east of Nuris. Thence it proceeds first north-westwards to a point due north of the built-up area of Zir'in and then westwards to the Afula-Jenin railway, thence north-westwards along the district boundary line to the point of intersection on the Hejaz railway. From here the boundary runs south-westwards, including the built-up area and some of the land of the village of Kh.Lid in the Arab State to cross the Haifa-Jenin road at a point on the district boundary between Haifa and Samaria west of El Mansi. It follows this

boundary to the southernmost point of the village of El Buteimat. From here it follows the northern and eastern boundaries of the village of Ar'ara, rejoining the Haifa-Samaria district boundary at Wadi'Ara, and thence proceeding south-south-westwards in an approximately straight line joining up with the western boundary of Qaqun to a point east of the railway line on the eastern boundary of Qaqun village. From here it runs along the railway line some distance to the east of it to a point just east of the Tulkarm railway station. Thence the boundary follows a line half-way between the railway and the Tulkarm-Qalqiliya-Jaljuliya and Ras el Ein road to a point just east of Ras el Ein station, whence it proceeds along the railway some distance to the east of it to the point on the railway line south of the junction of the Haifa-Lydd and Beit Nabala lines, whence it proceeds along the southern border of Lydda airport to its south-west corner, thence in a south-westerly direction to a point just west of the built-up area of Sarafand el'Amar, whence it turns south, passing just to the west of the built-up area of Abu el Fadil to the north-east corner of the lands of Beer Ya'Aqov. (The boundary line should be so demarcated as to allow direct access from the Arab State to the airport.) Thence the boundary line follows the western and southern boundaries of Ramle village, to the north-east corner of El Na'ana village, thence in a straight line to the southernmost point of El Barriya, along the eastern boundary of that village and the southern boundary of 'Innaba village. Thence it turns north to follow the southern side of the Jaffa-Jerusalem road until El Qubab, whence it follows the road to the boundary of Abu Shusha. It runs along the eastern boundaries of Abu Shusha, Seidun, Hulda to the southernmost point of Hulda, thence westwards in a straight line to the north-eastern corner of Umm Kalkha, thence following the northern boundaries of Umm Kalkha, Qazaza and the northern and western boundaries of Mukhezin to the Gaza District boundary and thence runs across the village lands of El Mismiya, El Kabira, and Yasur to the southern point of intersection, which is midway between the built-up areas of Yasur and Batani Sharqi.

From the southern point of intersection the boundary lines run north-westwards between the villages of Gan Yavne and Barqa to the sea at a point half way between Nabi Yunis and Minat el Qila, and south-eastwards to a point west of Qastina, whence it turns in a south-westerly direction, passing to the east of the built-up areas of Es Sawafir, Es Sharqiya and Ibdis. From the south-east corner of Ibdis village it runs to a point south-west of the built-up area of Beit 'Affa, crossing the Hebron-El Majdal road just to the west of the built-up area of Iraq Suweidan. Thence it proceeds southwards along the western village boundary of El Faluja to the Beersheba sub-district boundary. It then runs across the tribal lands of 'Arab el Jubarat to a point on the boundary between the sub-districts of Beersheba and Hebron north of Kh. Khuweilifa, whence it proceeds in a south-westerly direction to a point on the Beersheba-Gaza main road two kilometers to the north-west of the town. It then turns south-eastwards to reach Wadi Sab' at a point situated one kilometer to the west of it. From here it turns north-eastwards and proceeds along Wadi Sab' and along the Beersheba-Hebron road for a distance of one kilometer, whence it turns eastwards and runs in a straight line to Kh. Kuseifa to join the Beersheba-Hebron sub-district boundary. It then follows the Beersheba-Hebron boundary eastwards to a point north of Ras Ez Zuweira, only departing from it so as to cut across the base of the indentation between vertical grid lines 150 and 160.

About five kilometers north-east of Ras ez Zuweira it turns north, excluding from the Arab State a strip along the coast of the Dead Sea not more than seven kilometers in depth, as far as Ein Geddi, whence it turns due east to join the Transjordan frontier in the Dead Sea.

The northern boundary of the Arab section of the coastal plain runs from a point between Minat el Qila and Nabi Yunis, passing between the built-up areas of Gan Yavne and Barqa to the point of intersection. From here it turns south-westwards, running across the lands of Batani Sharqi, along the eastern boundary of the lands of Beit Daras and across the lands of Julis, leaving the

built-up areas of Batani Sharqi and Julis to the westwards, as far as the north-west corner of the lands of Beit Tima. Thence it runs east of El Jiya across the village lands of El Barbara along the eastern boundaries of the villages of Beit Jirja, Deir Suneid and Dimra. From the south-east corner of Dimra the boundary passes across the lands of Beit Hanun, leaving the Jewish lands of Nir-Am to the eastwards. From the south-east corner of Dimra the boundary passes across the lands of Beit Hanun, leaving the Jewish lands of Nir-Am to the eastwards. From the south-east corner of Beit Hanun the line runs south-west to a point south of the parallel grid line 100, then turns north-west for two kilometers, turning again in a south-westerly direction and continuing in an almost straight line to the north-west corner of the village lands of Kirbet Ikhza'a. From there it follows the boundary line of this village to its southernmost point. It then runs in a southerly direction along the vertical grid line 90 to its junction with the horizontal grid line 70. It then turns south-eastwards to Kh. el Ruheiba and then proceeds in a southerly direction to a point known as El Baha, beyond which it crosses the Beersheba-El 'Auja main road to the west of Kh. el Mushrif. From there it joins Wadi El Zaiyatin just to the west of El Subeita. From there it turns to the north-east and then to the south-east following this Wadi and passes to the east of 'Abda to join Wadi Nafkh. It then bulges to the south-west along Wadi Nafkh. It then bulges to the south-west along Wadi Nafkh, Wadi Ajrim and Wadi Lissan to the point where Wadi Lissan crosses the Egyptian frontier.

The area of the Arab enclave of Jaffa consists of that part of the town-planning area of Jaffa which lies to the west of the Jewish quarters lying south of Tel-Aviv, to the west of the continuation of Herzl street up to its junction with the Jaffa-Jerusalem road, to the south-west of the section of the Jaffa-Jerusalem road lying south-east of that junction, to the west of Mique Israel lands, to the north-west of Holon local council area, to the north of the line linking up the north-west corner of Holon with the north-east corner of Bat Yam local council area and to the north of Bat Yam local council area. The question of Karton quarter will be decided by the Boundary Commission, bearing in mind among other considerations the desirability of including the smallest possible number of its Arab inhabitants and the largest possible number of its Jewish inhabitants in the Jewish State.

B. THE JEWISH STATE

The north-eastern sector of the Jewish State (Eastern) Galilee) is bounded on the north and west by the Lebanese frontier and on the east by the frontiers of Syria and Transjordan. It includes the whole of the Hula Basin, Lake Tiberias, the whole of the Beisan sub-district, the boundary line being extended to the crest of the Gilboa Mountains and the Wadi Malih. From there the Jewish State extends north-west, following the boundary described in respect of the Arab State.

The Jewish Section of the coastal plain extends from a point between Minat et Qila and Nabi Yunis in the Gaza sub-district and includes the towns of Haifa and Tel-Aviv, leaving Jaffa as an enclave of the Arab State. The eastern frontier of the Jewish State follows the boundary described in respect of the Arab State.

The Beersheba area comprises the whole of the Beersheba sub-district, including the Negev and the eastern part of the Gaza sub-district, but excluding the town of Beersheba and those areas described in respect of the Arab State. It includes also a strip of land along the Dead Sea stretching from the Beersheba-Hebron sub-district boundary line to Ein Geddi, as described in respect of the Arab State.

C. THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The boundaries of the City of Jerusalem are as defined in the recommendations on the City of Jerusalem. (See Part III, Section B, below).

PART III

City of Jerusalem

A. SPECIAL REGIME

The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority on behalf of the United Nations.

B. BOUNDARIES OF THE CITY

The City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern, Bethlehem; the most western, Ein Karim (including also the built-up area of Motsa); and the most northern Shu'fat, as indicated on the attached sketch-map (annex B).

C. STATUTE OF THE CITY

The Trusteeship Council shall, within five months of the approval of the present plan, elaborate and approve a detailed Statute of the City which shall contain inter alia the substance of the following provisions:

1. *Government machinery; special objectives.* The Administering Authority in discharging its administrative obligations shall pursue the following special objectives:

- (a) To protect and to preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Moslem; to this end to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in Jerusalem;
- (b) To foster co-operation among all the inhabitants of the city in their own interests as well as in order to encourage and support the peaceful development of the mutual relations between the two Palestinian peoples throughout the Holy Land; to promote the security, well-being and any constructive measures of development of the residents, having regard to the special circumstances and customs of the various peoples and communities.

2. *Governor and administrative staff.* A Governor of the City of Jerusalem shall be appointed by the Trusteeship Council and shall be responsible to it. He shall be selected on the basis of special qualifications and without regard to nationality. He shall not, however, be a citizen of either State in Palestine.

The Governor shall represent the United Nations in the City and shall exercise on their behalf all

powers of administration, including the conduct of external affairs. He shall be assisted by an administrative staff classed as international officers in the meaning of Article 100 of the Charter and chosen whenever practicable from the residents of the city and of the rest of Palestine on a non-discriminatory basis. A detailed plan for the organization of the administration of the city shall be submitted by the Governor to the Trusteeship Council and duly approved by it.

3. *Local autonomy.* (a) The existing local autonomous units in the territory of the city (villages, townships and municipalities) shall enjoy wide powers of local government and administration.

(b) The Governor shall study and submit for the consideration and decision of the Trusteeship Council a plan for the establishment of a special town units consisting respectively, of the Jewish and Arab sections of new Jerusalem. The new town units shall continue to form part of the present municipality of Jerusalem.

4. *Security measures.* (a) The City of Jerusalem shall be demilitarized; its neutrality shall be declared and preserved, and no para-military formations, exercises or activities shall be permitted within its borders.

(b) Should the administration of the City of Jerusalem be seriously obstructed or prevented by the non-co-operation or interference of one or more sections of the population, the Governor shall have authority to take such measures as may be necessary to restore the effective functioning of the administration.

(c) To assist in the maintenance of internal law and order and especially for the protection of the Holy Places and religious buildings and sites in the city, the Governor shall organize a special police force of adequate strength, the members of which shall be recruited outside of Palestine. The Governor shall be empowered to direct such budgetary provision as may be necessary for the maintenance of this force.

5. *Legislative organization.* A Legislative Council, elected by adult residents of the city irrespective of nationality on the basis of universal and secret suffrage and proportional representation, shall have powers of legislation and taxation. No legislative measures shall, however, conflict or interfere with the provisions which will be set forth in the Statute of the City, nor shall any law, regulation, or official action prevail over them. The Statute shall grant to the Governor a right of vetoing bills inconsistent with the provisions referred to in the preceding sentence. It shall also empower him to promulgate temporary ordinances in case the council fails to adopt in time a bill deemed essential to the normal functioning of the administration.

6. *Administration of justice.* The Statute shall provide for the establishment of an independent judiciary system, including a court of appeal. All the inhabitants of the City shall be subject to it.

7. *Economic union and economic regime.* The City of Jerusalem shall be included in the Economic Union of Palestine and be bound by all stipulations of the undertaking and of any treaties issued there from, as well as by the decision of the Joint Economic Board. The headquarters of the Economic Board shall be established in the territory of the City.

The Statute shall provide for the regulation of economic matters not falling within the regime of the Economic Union, on the basis of equal treatment and non-discrimination for all members of the United Nations and their nationals.

8. *Freedom of transit and visit; control of residents.* Subject to considerations of security, and of

economic welfare as determined by the Governor under the directions of the Trusteeship Council, freedom of entry into, and residence within, the borders of the City shall be guaranteed for the residents or citizens of the Arab and Jewish States. Immigration into, and residence within, the borders of the city for nationals of other States shall be controlled by the Governor under the directions of the Trusteeship Council.

9. *Relations with the Arab and Jewish States.* Representatives of the Arab and Jewish States shall be accredited to the Governor of the City and charged with the protection of the interests of their States and nationals in connexion with the international administration of the City.

10. *Official languages.* Arabic and Hebrew shall be the official languages of the city. This will not preclude the adoption of one or more additional working languages, as may be required.

11. *Citizenship.* All the residents shall become ipso facto citizens of the City of Jerusalem unless they opt for citizenship of the State of which they have been citizens or, if Arabs or Jews, have filed notice of intention to become citizens of the Arab or Jewish State respectively, according to part I, section B, paragraph 9, of this plan.

The Trusteeship Council shall make arrangements for consular protection of the citizens of the City outside its territory.

12. *Freedoms of Citizens.* (a) Subject only to the requirements of public order and morals, the inhabitants of the City shall be ensured the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of conscience, religion and worship, language, education, speech and press, assembly and association, and petition.

(b) No discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants on the grounds of race, religion, language or sex.

(c) All persons within the City shall be entitled to equal protection of the laws.

(d) The family law and personal status of the various persons and communities and their religious interests, including endowments, shall be respected.

(e) Except as may be required for the maintenance of public order and good government, no measure shall be taken to obstruct or interfere with the enterprise of religious or charitable bodies of all faiths or to discriminate against any representative or member of these bodies on the ground of his religion or nationality.

(f) The City shall ensure adequate primary and secondary education for the Arab and Jewish communities respectively, in their own languages and in accordance with their cultural traditions.

The right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, while conforming to such educational requirements of a general nature as the City may impose, shall not be denied or impaired. Foreign educational establishments shall continue their activity on the basis of their existing rights.

(g) No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any inhabitant of the City of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the Press or in publications of any kind, or at public meetings.

13. *Holy Places.* (a) Existing rights in respect of Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall not be denied or impaired.

(b) Free access to the Holy Places and religious buildings or sites and the free exercise of worship shall be secured in conformity with existing rights and subject to the requirements of public order and decorum.

(c) Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall be preserved. No act shall be permitted which may in any way impair their sacred character. If at any time it appears to the Governor that any particular Holy Place, religious building or site is in need of urgent repair, the Governor may call upon the community or communities concerned to carry out such repair. The Governor may carry it out himself at the expense of the community or communities concerned if no action is taken within a reasonable time.

(d) No taxation shall be levied in respect of any Holy Place, religious building or site which was exempt from taxation on the date of the creation of the City. No change in the incidence of such taxation shall be made which would either discriminate between the owners or occupiers of Holy Places, religious buildings or sites, or would place such owners or occupiers in a position less favourable in relation to the general incidence of taxation than existed at the time of the adoption of the Assembly's recommendations.

14. *Special powers of the Governor in respect of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in the City and in any part of Palestine.* (a) The protection of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites located in the City of Jerusalem shall be a special concern of the Governor.

(b) With relation to such places, buildings and sites in Palestine outside the city, the Governor shall determine, on the ground of powers granted to him by the Constitutions of both States, whether the provisions of the Constitutions of the Arab and Jewish States in Palestine dealing therewith and the religious rights appertaining thereto are being properly applied and respected.

(c) The Governor shall also be empowered to make decisions on the basis of existing rights in cases of disputes which may arise between the different religious communities or the rites of a religious community in respect of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in any part of Palestine.

In this task he may be assisted by a consultative council of representatives of different denominations acting in an advisory capacity.

D. DURATION OF THE SPECIAL REGIME

The Statute elaborated by the Trusteeship Council on the aforementioned principles shall come into force not later than 1 October 1948. It shall remain in force in the first instance for a period of ten years, unless the Trusteeship Council finds it necessary to undertake a re-examination of these provisions at an earlier date. After the expiration of this period the whole scheme shall be subject to re-examination by the Trusteeship Council in the light of the experience acquired with its functioning. The residents of the City shall be then free to express by means of a referendum their wishes as to possible modifications of the regime of the City.

PART IV

CAPITULATIONS

States whose nationals have in the past enjoyed in Palestine the privileges and immunities of foreigners, including the benefits of consular jurisdiction and protection, as formerly enjoyed by capitulation or usage in the Ottoman Empire, are invited to renounce any right pertaining to them to the re-establishment of such privileges and immunities in the proposed Arab and Jewish States and the City of Jerusalem.

* * *

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the second session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 11, Volumes I-IV.

2/ This resolution was adopted without reference to a Committee.

3/ The following stipulation shall be added to the declaration concerning the Jewish State: "In the Jewish State adequate facilities shall be given to Arab-speaking citizens for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, in the legislature, before the Courts and in the administration."

4/ In the declaration concerning the Arab State, the words "by an Arab in the Jewish State" should be replaced by the words "by a Jew in the Arab State".

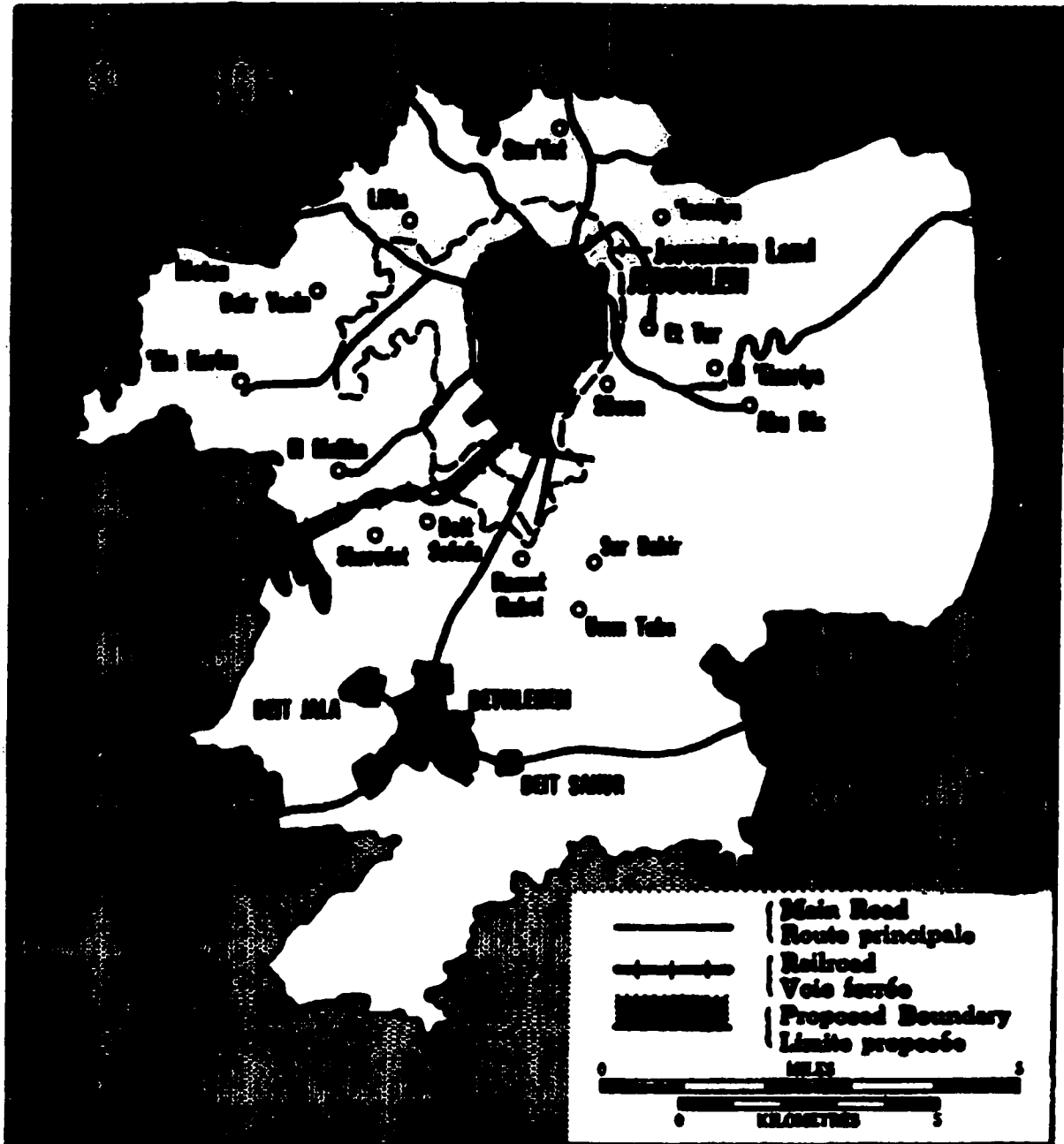
5/ The boundary lines described in part II are indicated in Annex A. The base map used in marking and describing this boundary is "Palestine 1:250000" published by the Survey of Palestine, 1946.

Annex A

Plan of Partition with Economic Union *(map reissued in 1956)*

Annex B

CITY OF JERUSALEM **BOUNDARIES PROPOSED** **BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE** **ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION**



Map No. 104 (b) United Nations UN Presentation 600 (b)
November 1947

**United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (III)
Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator**

The General Assembly,

Having considered further the situation in Palestine,

1. *Expresses* its deep appreciation of the progress achieved through the good offices of the late United Nations Mediator in promoting a peaceful adjustment of the future situation of Palestine. for which cause he sacrificed his life; and

Extends its thanks to the Acting Mediator and his staff for their continued efforts and devotion to duty in Palestine;

2. *Establishes* a Conciliation Commission consisting of three States members of the United Nations which shall have the following functions:

(a) To assume, in so far as it considers necessary in existing circumstances, the functions given to the United Nations Mediator on Palestine by resolution 186 (S-2) of the General Assembly of 14 May 1948;

(b) To carry out the specific functions and directives given to it by the present resolution and such additional functions and directives as may be given to it by the General Assembly or by the Security Council;

(c) To undertake, upon the request of the Security Council, any of the functions now assigned to the United Nations Mediator on Palestine or to the United Nations Truce Commission by resolutions of the Security Council; upon such request to the Conciliation Commission by the Security Council with respect to all the remaining functions of the United Nations Mediator on Palestine under Security Council resolutions, the office of the Mediator shall be terminated;

3. *Decides* that a Committee of the Assembly, consisting of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, shall present, before the end of the first part of the present session of the General Assembly, for the approval of the Assembly, a proposal concerning the names of the three States which will constitute the Conciliation Commission;

4. *Requests* the Commission to begin its functions at once, with a view to the establishment of contact between the parties themselves and the Commission at the earliest possible date;

5. *Calls upon* the Governments and authorities concerned to extend the scope of the negotiations provided for in the Security Council's resolution of 16 November 1948 ^{1/} and to seek agreement by negotiations conducted either with the Conciliation Commission or directly, with a view to the final settlement of all questions outstanding

between them;

6. *Instructs* the Conciliation Commission to take steps to assist the Governments and authorities concerned to achieve a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them;

7. *Resolves* that the Holy Places - including Nazareth - religious buildings and sites in Palestine should be protected and free access to them assured, in accordance with existing rights and historical practice; that arrangements to this end should be under effective United Nations supervision; that the United Nations Conciliation Commission, in presenting to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly its detailed proposals for a permanent international regime for the territory of Jerusalem, should include recommendations concerning the Holy Places in that territory; that with regard to the Holy Places in the rest of Palestine the Commission should call upon the political authorities of the areas concerned to give appropriate formal guarantees as to the protection of the Holy Places and access to them; and that these undertakings should be presented to the General Assembly for approval;

8. *Resolves* that, in view of its association with three world religions, the Jerusalem area, including the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern, Bethlehem; the most western, Ein Karim (including also the built-up area of Motsa); and the most northern, Shu'fat, should be accorded special and separate treatment from the rest of Palestine and should be placed under effective United Nations control;

Requests the Security Council to take further steps to ensure the demilitarization of Jerusalem at the earliest possible date;

Instructs the Conciliation Commission to present to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly detailed proposals for a permanent international regime for the Jerusalem area which will provide for the maximum local autonomy for distinctive groups consistent with the special international status of the Jerusalem area;

The Conciliation Commission is authorized to appoint a United Nations representative, who shall co-operate with the local authorities with respect to the interim administration of the Jerusalem area;

9. *Resolves* that, pending agreement on more detailed arrangements among the Governments and authorities concerned, the freest possible access to Jerusalem by road, rail or air should be accorded to all inhabitants of Palestine;

Instructs the Conciliation Commission to report immediately to the Security Council, for appropriate action by that organ, any attempt by any party to impede such access;

10. *Instructs* the Conciliation Commission to seek arrangements among the Governments and authorities concerned which will facilitate the economic development of the area,

including arrangements for access to ports and airfields and the use of transportation and communication facilities;

11. *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations;

12. *Authorizes* the Conciliation Commission to appoint such subsidiary bodies and to employ such technical experts, acting under its authority, as it may find necessary for the effective discharge of its functions and responsibilities under the present resolution;

The Conciliation Commission will have its official headquarters at Jerusalem. The authorities responsible for maintaining order in Jerusalem will be responsible for taking all measures necessary to ensure the security of the Commission. The Secretary-General will provide a limited number of guards to the protection of the staff and premises of the Commission;

13. *Instructs* the Conciliation Commission to render progress reports periodically to the Secretary-General for transmission to the Security Council and to the Members of the United Nations;

14. *Calls upon* all Governments and authorities concerned to co-operate with the Conciliation Commission and to take all possible steps to assist in the implementation of the present resolution;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the necessary staff and facilities and to make appropriate arrangements to provide the necessary funds required in carrying out the terms of the present resolution.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 - Excerpts
November 22, 1967

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

- (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
- (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity

- (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
- (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
- (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

Adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting.

APPENDIX V

Outline of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- 1- What is your city/town of origin?
- 2- When did you return?
- 3- What does being Palestinian mean for you?
- 4- What does Palestine mean for you?
- 5- How do you define homeland?
- 6- How did you dream of coming back? How did you think of return?
- 7- Regarding the notion of return, what are your thoughts?
- 8- Is there a difference between your view of homeland before and after coming back?
- 9- How did you experience coming back: describe the process with details.
- 10- What is the definition of a 'returnee'?
- 11- How do you define return?
- 12- Can you describe your experience of crossing the borders the first day you returned?
- 13- How did you feel and what did you think when you first saw Israeli soldiers?
- 14- When did you feel that you have returned?
- 15- Did you go to visit your city, town, or village of origin and did you find your house that you left? Describe the experience.
- 16- When you went to your house and hometown, what were you looking for?
- 17- What is your view regarding the right of return?
- 18- How was it like to adapt to a new life here?
- 19- Do you have a national identity number?
- 20- Why do you think returnees are labeled as such?
- 21- Palestinians differentiate each other by labeling a returnee and an insider. What is your take on that?
- 22- 'Returnees' mingle with each other, why do you think this is so?
- 23- Based on your knowledge, how many PLO persons returned?
- 24- Did the journey of return end by coming here?
- 25- Considering the existence of borders separating Gaza from the West Bank, what do you think of the existence of such borders?
- 26- Having experienced coming back, is there something that you want to say to those that are still outside and have not come back?
- 27- Do you go to Israel and how do you feel when you go?
- 28- What do you think about the future of the Palestinian state?
- 29- What kind of a state is the PNA looking to build?
- 30- What do you think of the peace negotiations?
- 31- What geography of Palestine is being negotiated for?
- 32- What do you think of the role of the PNA?
- 33- What are the most urgent issues that Palestinians need to work on in your view?